University of Northern Iowa

UNI ScholarWorks

Graduate Research Papers   Student Work

1999

Impact of Fatherlessness on a Child's needs based on Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Ivy S. Thompkins
University of Northern Iowa

[Let us know how access to this document benefits you]

Impact of Fatherlessness on a Child's needs based on Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Abstract

The purpose of this literature review is to provide readers with an insight into one of the things that impacts a child's needs. That one thing, unfortunately, is the absence of a father in his or her life. This paper reviews literature on the different needs (Physiological, Safety, Love and Belongingness, Esteem, and Self-Actualization) that a child has according to Abraham Maslow. After each need has been determined and defined, then the impact of fatherlessness on those needs are discussed. The role of the single mother and society are also mentioned. Guidelines of how fathers, mothers, and society can impact the life of the child are being used in many areas of the United States. Many children are victims of this fatherless trend in the world, but all do not turn out to be one of the horrible statistics. Many children triumph over the impacts of fatherlessness and become what they desire to be.

Impact of Fatherlessness on a Child's needs
based on Abraham Maslow's
Hierarchy of Needs

A Graduate Research Paper
Submitted to the
Division of Early Childhood Education
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

b y
Ivy S. Thompkins
July, 1999

This Research Paper by: Ivy S. Thompkins

Titled: The Impact of Fatherlessness on a Child's needs based on Abraham Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs*

has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

Charles R. May

July 2, 1999
Date Approved

Graduate Advisor

Judith M. Finkelstein

July 2, 1999
Date Approved

Graduate Faculty Reader

W. P. Callahan

7-2-99
Date Approved

Department Head

Abstract

The purpose of this literature review is to provide readers with an insight into one of the things that impacts a child's needs. That one thing, unfortunately, is the absence of a father in his or her life. This paper reviews literature on the different needs (Physiological, Safety, Love and Belongingness, Esteem, and Self-Actualization) that a child has according to Abraham Maslow. After each need has been determined and defined, then the impact of fatherlessness on those needs are discussed. The role of the single mother and society are also mentioned. Guidelines of how fathers, mothers, and society can impact the life of the child are being used in many areas of the United States. Many children are victims of this fatherless trend in the world, but all do not turn out to be one of the horrible statistics. Many children triumph over the impacts of fatherlessness and become what they desire to be.

Table of Content

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

According to Blankerhorn (1995) the United States is becoming a fatherless society. A generation ago, an American child could expect to grow up with both of his or her parents. In a hearing before the United States Congress (1996), Wade F. Horn, a child psychologist, stated the following: "the number of children without fathers grew from 8 million in 1960 to 23 million in 1995; four out of ten children in America do not live with their fathers" (p.11). Today, many American children can expect to grow up without a father. Fatherlessness is approaching a rough parity with fatherhood as being a defining characteristic of American childhood (Blankerhorn, 1995).

Many children are having problems in school that are unexplainable, but not having a father in the home, or someone to fill that void of a male role model, is a factor (Biller,1974). The absence of fathers in the home is vital, serious, and relevant to a child's needs. What are the needs of a child?

In this respect, Maslow (1970) gave the definition of a need. He believed a need was something that was lacking in a person's life; it's not enough of something. When a father is not present in a child's life

his or her needs are deprived. Lack of satisfaction of a child's needs will lead to some kind of pathology (Feist, 1990). As a result, a pathogenic environment can easily hinder a child's positive potentials and evoke hatred, destructiveness, and self-defeating behavior (Ewen, 1993).

Hjelle & Ziegler (1981) stated that Maslow's theory emphasized the uniqueness of an individual, or child, and the importance of values and meaning, and the potential for self-direction and personal growth. In a further discussion of the *Hierarchy of Needs Theory*, Frager & Fadiman (1984) stated the following:

> One of Maslow's main points is that we are always desiring something and rarely reach a state of complete satisfaction without any goals or desires. His need hierarchy is an attempt to predict what kinds of new desires will arise once the old ones are sufficiently satisfied so that they no longer dominate behavior. (p. 384)

In this respect, the absences of a father would be a basic need. If this need is not met then the other needs will suffer as well.

Background of the Study

In the Victorian Era (1838-1886) fathers were viewed as the breadwinner of the family and mothers as the home keepers. Though many think of fatherlessness as a trend of recent years, it has been occurring for at least a century and a half (Popenoe, 1996).

Even during those times when a father was in the home it was the mother's responsibility to rear the child with particular moral and psychological values. During the Victorian Era, society expected men to be successful. This was a very stressful time to be a man.

The Victorian Era (1838-1886) focused on children as never before in the past. Birthrates declined during this era because parents recognized that the fewer children they had, then the more they could invest (time, money, love, etc.) in each child. "The goal of Victorian male childrearing was to generate individualistic male adults who could be independent, who could stand on their own two feet" (Popenoe, 1996, p. 112).

By the late nineteenth century (1880's) women decided that they wanted to be more active in the public life. They did not desire to be out of the home, but they wanted men to share in the responsibilities of home and children. However, just as women wanted to change their lives, so did men. From this, one can see how the father moved further and further out of his child's life. "More men were leaving their families" (Popenoe, 1996, p.112).

In the 1900's shrinkage of fathers continued to increase. During this time many writers wrote about the importance of a father, or at least a male role model. The frequency of these writings were due to the changing social conditions of youth.

"Apprehensions were growing about overly aggressive or hypermasculine, as well as hedonistic behavior in boys, traits that even then were known to be associated with father neglect and father absence" (Popenoe, 1996, p. 113).

Hargreaves (1990) reported that children of single parents had special problems. This four-month research study (Children of Single Parents and the Schools Project) was used to examine "...the school experiences of children from one-parent families in order to learn whether these children have problems that are different from the school problems of children from two-parent households" (p. 1-2).

The findings of this study revealed the following:

We found that both family conditions and school practice contribute to the problems that single-parent children have in school. Many school practices assume that students come from two-parent families, not recognizing that children from one-parent families often have emotional and economic problems not experienced by most two-parent children. In many schools these assumptions have created an environment in which single-parent children rarely receive the sensitivity and attention that they need in order to succeed. To date, few schools have modified their practices to accommodate one-parent children. School attitudes, parent/teacher conference schedules, curriculum materials, classroom discussions, and other student policies must be adjusted to meet the unique needs of one-parent families. (p. 5)

Also, Hargreaves (1991) stated that the stress of being in a single-parent family may decrease the child's self-determination and motivation in school. Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs Theory* addresses

the motivation issues. "Maslow developed his hierarchy as part of a general theory of motivation, not as a precise predictor of individual behavior" (Frager & Fadiman, 1984, p. 384). Thus the absence of a father has an impact on a child's need to succeed in life. These needs are understood best by using Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs Theory* in examining them.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to survey the literature concerning the impact of the absence of a father, or father surrogate, on the needs of a child, based on Abraham Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs Theory*. In order to achieve this purpose the following questions will be addressed:

1. How are the needs of a child determined in relation to Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs Theory*?

2. What impact does the absence of the father have on the needs of a child?

3. How can mothers effectively deal with the impact of fatherlessness?

4. How can society ameliorate the impact of the absence of a father on the needs of a child?

5. What guidelines can be developed to ameliorate the

impacts of fatherlessness?

Need for the Study

Fathers are important and unique in the development of the child (Hamilton, 1977). They do things that a mother, though she may try, can not do. When that important and unique individual is not present in a child's life, a struggle exists either directly or indirectly, for the satisfaction of his or her needs. Many schools are following the philosophy of Abraham Maslow. Fatherless children are being assessed in ways that are identical to those who are in two-parent homes, but fatherless children are not doing as well as two-parent children. This is because of the method of reaching the expectation, it is one that is not appropriate for fatherless children (Hargreaves, 1991). In actuality, fatherless children are under more stress and the fact that a father is not around needs to be taken into consideration.

Schools need to be aware of how they can ameliorate these impacts of fatherlessness on children in today's society, and the one to come. We may not be able to put each one of these children in homes where a father is present, or even find a father for their home, but there is something that can be done. Through our schools, communities, and by using the media, we must first educate

ourselves about the impact that fatherlessness has on children, and then we can start the amelioration process.

Limitations of the Study

Availability of literature was restricted to material presently available at the Rod Library on the campus of the University of Northern Iowa, and the Joeten Library on the island of Saipan, near Guam. Also, all of the research on the topics, impacts of fatherlessness and Abraham Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs Theory*, were not available to the author.

Definition of Terms

Certain terms in this paper have a particular definition. All of the definitions, with the exception of those which are properly noted, have been taken from the Webster's (1992) New World Dictionary.

Ameliorate: "...to make or become better; improve" (p. 26).

B-love: "An unselfish and nonpossessive giving of love and affection to another person. A growth motive, richer and more enjoyable than D-love" (Ewen, 1993, p. 405).

Cohabitant: "...to dwell or reside in company or in the same place (Urdang, 1968, p. 261).

D-love: "...the selfish need to receive love and affection from others. A deficiency motive, prerequisite to the emergence of B-love" (Ewen, 1993, p. 405).

Gemeinschaftsgefuhl: A German word from Alfred Adler meaning social interest, or "...a community feeling or a sense of feeling at one with all human beings" (Feist, 1990, p. 700).

Hedonistic: "...the branch of psychology that deals with pleasurable and unpleasurable states of consciousness" (Urdang, 1968, p. 613).

Hierarchy of Needs Theory: "A model of motivation wherein certain human needs usually do not become important, or even noticeable, until other lower-order needs have, to some extent, been satisfied" (Ewen, 1993, p. 405). There are five levels which include: Physiological (lowest), Safety, Love, Esteem, and Self-Actualization (highest).

Parity: "...the condition of being the same or equal, equality " (p. 641).

Pathogenic: "...causing disease" (Webster's Dictionary, 1974 p. 545).

Pathology: "...the branch of medicine that deals with the causes, symptoms, and results of disease" (p. 646).

Self-Actualization: "The development and fulfillment of one's

9

own inherent potentials and capacities; the highest and most pleasurable need of all, but also the most difficult to recognize and satisfy" (Ewen, 1993, p. 405).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Needs of a Child

Abraham Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs Theory* is a humanistic approach to motivation. A motive is a conscious desire, impulse, or urge (Maslow, 1970). The humanistic approach is one that believes that humans are motivated to grow and mature (Klein, 1982). However, these motives can easily be restrained or suppressed by social pressures (e.g., absence of a father).

Maslow (1970) discovered that individuals have five levels of needs. They are organized in a hierarchy. In this hierarchy, needs are arranged in order of priority or potency (Hjelle & Ziegler, 1981). Maslow (1970) explained that the lower level needs are more potent and are priority needs. "When lower needs are taken care of, then the next higher needs make their appearance in awareness..." (DiCaprio, 1974, p. 236). Maslow (1970) listed the needs in the following order: *Physiological Needs, Safety Needs, Love and Belongingness Needs, Esteem Needs, and Self-Actualization Needs.*

Physiological Needs are those needs that satisfy the basic physical needs, which are the hunger, thirst, sleep, and identity needs. These needs are very vital to the understanding of the

behavior of children. The lack of these needs can have a devastating effect on behavior (Hjelle & Ziegler, 1981). Physiological needs are the only needs that are completely satisfied and in some cases overly satisfied. Not only that, but they also are reoccurring needs (i.e., a child eats and is full, but eventually becomes hungry again) (Feist, 1984).

Safety Needs gradually emerge when the physiological needs are satisfied. These needs include those of "...physical security, stability, dependency, protection, and freedom from such threatening forces as illness, fear, anxiety, danger, and chaos" (Feist, 1984, p. 575). There is never too much safety nor can safety be completely satisfied. One can not be completely protected from the dangers of the world (e.g., fires, floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes). These needs are more observable in children who depend on adults to satisfy the need for them (Maslow, 1970). Emergency situations cause safety needs to arouse, and when a child is sick he or she will exhibit certain behaviors of helplessness which require particular safety needs to be satisfied. "Safety needs may take the form of fears..." (DiCaprio, 1984, p. 237).

Love and Belongingness Needs become visible after the physiological and safety needs have been fairly well satisfied. Most people stay at this level for the majority of their lives. Constantly

trying to be accepted and loved by others (Maslow, 1970). Friendships, companionship, families, clubs, and other organizations are all benefits for the love and belongingness need. Feist (1990) stated that when children are not supplied with the love they need their psychological health suffers, but when the love that is needed is gratified then children can move on to the next level in their lives.

Hjelle & Ziegler (1981) stated that Maslow was not speaking of sex when he spoke love, but what he meant was "...a healthy, loving relationship between two people, which includes mutual respect, admiration and trust" (p. 372). Mature love, which is what Maslow (1970) referred to as *B-love*, is when you desire a person for the value of that person or the worth of that person, rather than because of a lack or deficit that one may feel, and needs the void filled by another person, which is what Maslow (1970) referred to as *D-love* (DiCaprio, 1974).

Esteem Needs, which include self-respect as well as respect from others, competence, confidence, achievement, and reputation, are motivators when the previous needs are satisfied. Maslow (1970) indicated two levels within the esteem need. One being how a person thinks about or treats themselves (e.g., self-respect, self-esteem, self-regard, etc.), and the other is how other people think about or treat them (e.g., reputation, recognition, acceptance, appreciation, etc.)

(Feist, 1990; Hjelle & Ziegler, 1981; and DiCaprio, 1974). When a person has esteem, either from themselves or from others, it is because of an effort that they have put forth. In other words it has been earned.

The last level of the hierarchy is the **Self-Actualization Need**, which is when a person desires to become all they can become. Maslow did much more research into the self-actualization need than any of the other needs. He found, in the 1960's, that many college students had gratified their basic needs, including reputation and self-esteem, but they did not become self-actualized (Maslow, 1964). This need of self-actualization is prominent in adults; whereas, younger people strive to fulfill the lower needs first, and as adults, strive to become self-actualized.

To realize one's potential and to set out to achieve it is self-actualization. "One of Maslow's main points is that we are always desiring something and rarely reach a state of complete satisfaction without any goals or desires" (Frager & Fadiman, 1984, p. 384). Maslow (1970) stated 15 qualities that characterize a self-actualized person:

* More efficient perception of reality (i.e., they easily detect phoniness in people).

* Acceptance of self, others, and nature (i.e., they do not belittle

other people, they except the weather conditions, and they are good to themselves).

* Spontaneity, simplicity, and naturalness (i.e., they are real and not fake, and they enjoy the simple things in life).

* Problem-centered (i.e., they know that the world does not revolve around them).

* The need for privacy (i.e., they can be alone and not be lonely).

* Autonomy (i.e., they are independent).

* Continued freshness of appreciation (i.e., they can appreciate a new sunrise every morning).

* The peak experience (i.e., when one feels separated from ones body).

* Gemeinshcaftsgefuhl (i.e., Alfred Adler's term meaning social interest or a feeling with humanity).

* Profound interpersonal relationships (i.e., they have good relationships with other people).

* The democratic character structure (i.e., they are friendly with everyone regardless of color, race, or sex).

* Discrimination between means and ends (i.e., they have a clear sense of wrong and right conduct).

* Philosophical sense of humor (i.e., their humor serves a

purpose beyond a laugh).

 * Creativeness (i.e., they bring fresh and new ideas to their job).

 * Resistance of enculturation (i.e., they can fit in wherever they are).

The hierarchy of needs can be applied to most children when determining the needs of a child. Although it may vary with the differences in culture (i.e., what it takes to satisfy a need in one culture may be done differently in another culture); nevertheless, these are the needs of a child in relation to Abraham Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs Theory*.

The Impact of Fatherlessness on the Needs

The needs of humans, adults as well as children, have been determined and described as told by Abraham Maslow. In this section of the chapter, I will discuss the impacts of the absence of a father on the needs (Physiological Needs; Safety Needs; Love and Belongingness Needs; Esteem Needs; and Self-Actualization Need). If one need is not fairly well satisfied then all other needs suffer as well.

The first and most essential need that suffers, or that is impacted by the the absence of a father is, of course, the first need on the hierarchy: **Physiological Needs**. As I stated earlier these

needs are the basic physical needs of food thirst, sleep, and identity. Hjelle & Ziegler (1981) stated that when a child is deprived of these basic needs his or her behavior is devastatingly influenced.

When a child is in a single-parent household then income is lower, therefore status is lower. There is less money being generated in a single-parent household. The 1992 statistics of *Poverty in the United States* revealed that about 66 percent of children in single-mother households lived in poverty. In the past, poverty occurred because fathers were unemployed, but today it is because fathers are not in the household at all (Blankerhorn, 1995).

McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) stated that it is hard to *achieve and maintain* psychological success when basic needs have not been completely satisfied. Child support is a basic need when a father is absent. That financial support should make-up for the lack of money that is not being generated in the household. Unfortunately, "...40 percent of children who are theoretically eligible for child support do not have a child support award at all, and a quarter of those with an award receive nothing" (p. 25).

Identity is another factor in the psychological needs. The impact of the absence of a father on identity is different for males and females. Each gender needs a father to satisfy different aspects of the identity role in their lives.

For females, the research is very limited. Most of society see the mother as the only person the daughter needs to identify with, however, the father's role is needed as well. He is needed to set a foundation for his daughter to build upon. When a father is absent in a young girl's life, her femininity is not necessarily rejected by her, but it does decrease (Lamb, 1976).

For males, the impact of the absence of a father is first discovered through masculinity. Early research of fatherless families was done from a psychoanalytical approach. In Hamilton's research (1977), he cited Hetherington's report of boys in father absent households, from ages 9 to 12 years old. She found that they were less masculine and more dependent on peers, as well as less aggressive, and they engaged in less physical contact games. Many statistics have proven that when a father is absent from a boy's life his masculinity is lessened (Lamb, 1976).

Young males also are deprived of their identity when they don't know who their fathers are. During biblical times men were known by who their fathers were (e.g., King Solomon, son of David). When males are not aware of who they are, then they endeavor to be the person they think they are. Many times this results in gang joining.

If a child's physiological needs are not completely satisfied

then it is obvious that his or her **Safety Needs** will suffer as well. When the safety needs are lacking then the child may express feelings of insecurity, anxiety, mistrust, and constantly seeking out areas that present him or her with more stability (Hjelle & Ziegler, 1981).

Fathers are our providers and protectors. They are the ones that are responsible for making sure that the house is safe and secure at night before the father goes to bed. This factor of fatherlessness causes the child's life to be unstable, unpredictable, and not safe (Hjelle & Ziegler, 1981).

The need to satisfy the lack of safety in a child's life can be observed even as they reach adulthood. Financial protection and security is vital for adults, and some who have not satisfied this need are labeled as "obsessive-compulsive neurotics" because of their behavior. They spend much of their time searching for safety in many areas of their lives.

The lack of safety can also lead to gang joining and peer groups, which would be categorized with another need: **Love and Belongingness Need**. These groups, for males in father absent households, become substitute masculine models for them. This can be a positive aspect, but it has generally been a negative aspect. Most of these gangs are crime affiliated, violent, destructive, and most of

the members end up in jail.

For females, the impact of the absence of a father is deeper than observable aspects. Most of the attention has been focused on teen-pregnancies. This becomes a factor for females who grow up in a single-mother household, and the mother is dating or cohabitant with a man. The daughter may get a message that sex outside of marriage is acceptable (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994).

Although teen pregnancy is an important factor in father absent households, it is secondary. The primary factor is the first stage of Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages of development: *Trust vs. Mistrust*. When a father is absent in the household the female infant can not establish a trusting relationship with the father and in turn has difficulty establishing later relationships with other men (Hamilton, 1977).

Fathers are needed to set standards and model acceptable adult behaviors for their children. The impact of the absence of a father on identity is beyond researchers ability to discover. Not only on identity, but also poverty, which includes the food, thirst, and sleep needs. Fathers are more than providers of food and money, they are also models for their children, good or bad.

The **Esteem Needs** play a critical role in the life of a teenager. Esteem Needs include self-respect and respect from others.

Individuals need to believe and know that they are important and capable or competent. Teenagers also need to know that they are appreciated (Hjelle & Ziegler, 1981).

A teenager who has been in contact with his or her father since childhood, but all of a sudden the father is no longer contacting him or her, may begin to experience lack in the previous needs as well as the esteem need.

Now, what about that teenager who has never seen or heard from his or her father? They may not ever be able to love themselves or anybody else for that matter. Low or no esteem can lead to suicide. Feelings of inferiority, weakness, helplessness, and hopelessness can result. Depression is also a sign of the lack of esteem (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994).

The father's role is very clear here. Children need to be praised and appreciated from parents, as well as others. When a father's encouraging words are not present, the child suffers (Popenoe, 1996).

The final need is the **Self-Actualization Need**. First, and foremost, the impact of fatherlessness on the self-actualization need is indirect. As was stated earlier, Maslow believed that a self-actualized person is someone who desires to become all they can become, but who can think about becoming someone or something when they are hungry? This particular need, for many children and

adults who have grown up without a father, is thought of as last priority, and sometimes it is never reached. It is not prominent when other essential, lower level needs are lacking (Maslow, 1970).

Lamb (1976) stated some research that suggests that boys are influenced more by the absence of a father than girls are. However, Lamb also cited researchers who believe that girls are affected just as much as boys. There is definitely a difference in the way it impacts each gender, and this difference depends on the area of development that is being considered.

However, both males and females are impacted the same way as it relates to the self-actualization need. They are either striving to become self-actualized or they are still striving to satisfy lower needs. Self-actualization sees no gender. However, both males and females can be helped in dealing with the impacts of fatherlessness. We must start trying to ameliorate these influences when children are young.

Who's responsibility is it to ameliorate these impacts? From my experience as a fatherless child, all of the responsibility was my mother's. However, society can help; also mothers need to know how they can utilize the help that is available to them.

What is the role of the Mother

The single mother's role is one that is vital in her fatherless child's life. She is the primary care giver for the child. She must see to it that all of the child's needs are being satisfied. This is not an easy task, and may seem impossible for some mothers.

Being responsible for another life will change everything in a soon-to-be mother's life. A mother will need to change a lot of her thinking habits; she must think of the baby as well as herself. She should begin to think, before the child is born, realistically about the lives of her and the child after he or she is born (Hammerslough, 1990).

For some single-mothers, the task of dealing with the pressures of making practical decisions for herself and the baby is done all on her own with no help from others. She is fully responsible for the protection, nurturing, well-being, and up-bringing of that baby.

Ford (1995) stated that the task of raising a child can be done alone, but it is much easier when you have the support of family and friends. Many people are included in this support group, such as grandparents, baby-sitters, neighbors, teachers, coaches, and others. These people can help the mother make difficult decisions. Where will she and the baby live? Is it a safe environment for her and the child? Is it near all of the places she will need to go, and if

not, will she have a car? (Hammerslough, 1990).

Welfare can help make some of these questions and decisions easier to make; however, welfare recipients should not be solely dependent on welfare or food stamps forever (Hammerslough, 1990).

Ford (1995) stated in *Wonderful Ways to Love a Child*, "...parenting requires continuous adjustment and loving actions, even when you are too tired to feel much love" (p. 3).

> I have come to see that the most important part of parenting is the quality of the relationship between you and your children - not what they wear, how they comb their hair, whether they finish in first, second, or third place, but rather how it feels to be together. When they are grown and have children of their own, none of you will remember their grades, but all of you will remember the quality of your relationship. (p. 4-5)

Ford (1995) also stated:

> Although parenting is perhaps the most important calling, it is the least-taught art in this culture. As a society we seem to think that the mere biological capacity to bear children qualifies us to raise them well. But we are slowly recognizing that we could all use some lessons, some skill building, and fortunately there are many great classes around. Parent Effectiveness Training is a wonderful course taught almost everywhere, or look for classes at your local community college: talk to other parents, or read books on parenting and child development. (p. 13)

Society, of course, must and will play a part also in making these effects better on the child and the mother.

How can society ameliorate these impacts

It is obvious that the fatherless society needs help. Fathers are not completely aware of the impact that their absence has on their child's life. Society must first educate fathers about the importance, beyond money, that they have in their child's life (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). There were hearings in the United States Congress (Senate Committee) (1996) about this issue and many insightful things were said. Notable speakers, such as Wade F. Horn, made important suggestions. Horn, during that hearing (1996), stated that fathering workshops, mentoring programs, and father-friendly workplaces are just a few steps that can be taken to educate better the fathers of today.

Fathers also need to be held more accountable for the well-being of their children. That burden should not be the mothers' responsibility entirely. Fathers need to take responsibility as well as mothers (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994). Also, Horn (1996) stated that not only should fathers be economically responsible, but child support should also cover the psychological, emotional, and physical well-being of the child. Fathers need to know that their responsibility is not just to provide economically for their children, but, "...fathers should also be engaged in their child's life as nurtures, disciplinarians, teachers, and moral instructions" (p. 12).

To lower the poverty rate, Horn, in the hearing (1996) suggested that we "...restructure welfare policies to reward marriage and responsible fatherhood" (p. 13). Not to totally remove the funding from the present policy, but encourage and reward more of the good fathers, then maybe more fathers would endeavor to do more for and with their families. Horn, (1996) stated that the welfare rules encourage the breaking-up of households. "For example, current federal *Aid to Families with Dependent Children* (AFDC) rules prevent a woman from receiving full benefits if the father is at home and has an employment record or works more than 100 hours a month" (p. 13). The government can make these rules better, but children are starving and they are the ones who suffer. However other organizations are in the business of aiding families with these kinds of set backs. The Ford Foundation aids families who experience these types of problems with a system that is all talk and no action (Gouke & Rollins, 1990).

The school system can help. Gouke & Rollins (1990) cited an article by James Garvin called *A challenge for Middle School Teachers*. In this article the author discussed the following:

> Frustrations and concerns of children whose parents have separated affect their school behavior and teachers need to take time to understand the unique needs of school age children as they relate to behavior and achievement in school. Teachers need to show understanding and concern, keep

contact with divorced parents, abandon stereotyped vocabulary, select literature to help adolescents cope, adjust the curriculum to recognize children from single-parent families, and encourage out-of-class programs that aid socialization. The child's self-concept should be reinforced to give the student the strength to cope with problems at home and at school. (p. 411)

The school systems in the communities where father absences are at a higher rate can look to hire more male teachers. Males in the community can volunteer at local schools and day cares. Father surrogates are needed. Organizations are designed for that purpose. For example, *Big Brothers and Big Sisters* use men and women who serve as volunteer models for boys and girls, to help children who are deprived of their fathers (Gouke & Rollins, 1990).

To help the children with life skills such as when they are home alone, there is the *Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts* program. The *Tiger Club* is also an organization designed to help students in their family life. These are family oriented programs to assist children in social skills and other behavioral skills. Both of the programs offer extra-curricula activities for the children to be engaged in (Gouke & Rollins, 1990).

Many other organizations also help children who are in fatherless situations. The first priority is the child, not the father. Helping the father is essential, but the children are the ones who suffer when the fathers are away, even if they are striving to do

better.

Many national attempts have been done and are continuing to make this situation of fatherlessness better. By making these improvements, it is better for the children, the mother, the father, and society.

CHAPTER THREE

GUIDELINES

These are some guidelines that can be used in order to ameliorate the impacts of fatherlessness. The mother's role is vital, therefore it is appropriate to first give guidelines for the mother.

1. A single-mother will need to change her thinking habits.

It is no longer about her, but it is now about her and the baby (Hammerslough, 1990). This can be difficult for those single-mothers who are used to it being just them. They should begin to ask themselves questions that involve the baby and his or her well-being.

2. Raising a child is much easier when you have the support from extended family members and friends (Ford, 1995).

This has proven to be very helpful, even in my own case. Uncles, brothers, or even cousins can be a father surrogate for the child. It also helps as far as the financial situation is concerned.

3. Welfare should be used as an assistant in times of need, not as a dependent source.

It is there to help, but not for people to manipulate. Child support is to be used to supply the child and the mother with the necessary items to satisfy the basic needs (food, clothing, etc.). AFDC

is also a part of that guideline that can assist the single-mother to satisfy certain needs for the child and herself.

4.   Love is the key guideline for any single-mother.

Ford (1995) made a profound point when she said "...parenting requires continuous adjustment and loving actions, even when you are too tired to feel much love" (p. 3). The relationship between a single-mother and her child is essential in the development of the child.

Society and fathers have a different set up guidelines. The role of society is vital for the father.

5.   Society is responsible for educating the father on how important his child needs him (physically, emotionally, psychologically, and economically) (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994).

Money is important, but there is aid for that from the government, but the other areas of a child's life must be satisfied by the father.   Most fathers don't know or understand the nature of their importance.

6.   Support groups are needed for fathers.

Fathering workshops, mentoring programs, and father-friendly workplaces are examples of how society can help. The government should make fathers more accountable for the well-being of their children. Money is not always the answer. Children need

psychological, emotional, and physical support from the father (United States hearing, 1996).

7. The welfare system can be restructured to reward marriage and responsible fathers.

Maybe this will be an awakening for those fathers who are unemployed, and are not seeking employment. If fathers see that they will be praised and rewarded for taking better care of there children then maybe they will be more willingly to participate in their child's life.

8. Focus should stay on the child.

The child is the one who is really suffering. It is about the child and we should not forget that. It is not about making the economy better, although it will, but it is about the child.

9. Organizations are needed to assist children dealing with the impacts of fatherlessness.

Society should advertise these organizations(*Big Brother and Big Sisters, Tiger Club, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts*) so single-mothers can know what and who is out there to help her. These organizations serve the communities by helping children have after school alternatives, and children are taught many home-training techniques.

10. Schools, churches, media, and the entertainment world all

can play a part in the amelioration process.

We have to do it together. Schools can hire more male teachers. Churches can do more outreach ministry in the communities. Media can report the good things that fatherless children do instead of the bad. The entertainment world can portray better images of families in all communities.

These guidelines are just a start. None of them should be viewed as an end to a mean, but as a means to an end.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, and RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this paper was to survey research on literature concerning the importance of a father as it concerns the needs of a child. I did this by answering the following question:

1. How are the needs of a child determined in relation to Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs Theory*?

Physiological Need, Safety Need, Love and Belongingness Need, Esteem Need, and Self-Actualization Need are the needs of a human as determined by Abraham Maslow. Each need may be effected, directly or indirectly, by fatherlessness.

2. What impact does the absence of the father have on the needs of a child?

Physiological Needs are directly effected. Food, thirst, sex role (identity), and other physical concerns are effected due to the fact that the father's presence, time, and money are not there in the home. Safety Needs, that are unsatisfied, may cause "obsessive-compulsive neurotics". Fathers have a way of making everything safe, but when they are not there then the child may fell unsafe. Love and Belongingness Needs are also directly influenced by the father's absence. This causes a lack of identity in the child. Gangs

and other problems begin to arise because of the lack of satisfaction of this need. Lack of esteem needs can cause a teenager to not love his or herself, or anyone else. This lack can lead to depression, which can lead to suicide. Self-Actualization is, in most cases, never satisfied. This need suffers indirectly from the absence of a father. If a child is not able to satisfy the first priority needs then the last priority needs are never met.

3. How can mothers effectively deal with the impact of fatherlessness?

The mother's role is very essential in the life of a child who is fatherless. The mother must effectively deal with the child's needs as well as her own. Each situation between the mother and child must be dealt with in a delicate way. There are support groups for single mother's as well as classes to help her learn what is the best way to help her child.

4. How can society ameliorate the impact of the absence of a father on the needs of a child?

Society's role should come from the church, law, media, school, and other places children are exposed to outside of the home. Many organizations have been formed to help students with family situations, such as fatherlessness. *Boy Scouts* and *Girl Scouts* are excellent examples of society trying to do something to ameliorate

the impact of the absence of a father on a child's needs.

5. What guidelines can be developed to ameliorate the impacts of fatherlessness?

Guidelines for ameliorating these impacts are vital to our future. Mothers, fathers, and society have a role in this process. Mothers should always remember to love a child no matter what the cost, or no matter how she feels. Society has the responsibility of educating the father on just how important his role is in his child's life. The father should become more involved in his child's life. Schools, media, and churches all can do something.

Conclusion

The following conclusions were drawn from this study.

I can't say that these ideas will completely eliminate the effects of fatherlessness on a child, but they will make it better for the child in the outcome of his or her life. I believe that the focus is being taken off of the child and being placed on the impacts of fatherlessness on society.

Everyone can be responsible in making the impacts of fatherlessness better for the child who is experiencing it. Fatherlessness is present in the world today and if something is not done then it will become an acceptable practice.

Children are influenced by this trend. The influence does not always lead to something bad, but it does a delay in the process of meeting the needs.

Mothers, fathers, and society (schools, churches, media, etc) are responsible for doing what they can do to help. Organizations are designed to assist mothers, fathers, and children who are victims of this problem. Let us not start tomorrow, but let's do what can be done today.

I grew up in a home where only my mother was present. I did visit my father, every blue (full) moon, but there were never any visits from my father. My mother raised me to love, regardless of the actions of the other person. That was hard for me as a child, but the more I did it and saw my brother (who was also fatherless) doing it, the easier it became for me.

My father did not send the child support checks to my mother. Sometimes he didn't send them because he didn't have a job, my mother would tell me. Other times, I'm really not sure. Even though that money, which was needed, was not coming, I still ate; I still had clothes to wear, and I still had a home to live in. It may not have seemed enough to some of the authors of the literature that I reviewed, but it was more than enough for me.

For a long time I had my mother's last name (Sinclair). When I

was about 12 years old she had to change my last name in order for her to receive aid (welfare, food stamps, etc.). As a result of this happening I felt like I was no longer who I was; I no longer had an identity. This made me very angry. My mother was forced to change my name to a name of a man who obviously did not care about me, or my mother, so she could receive aid. However, in time I realized that who I was would not change because of my name change.

As I got older I began to understand what it meant to really hate someone. My mother would sit me down and talk and pray with me. She would say, "Ivy, you have got to forgive your father for the things that he hasn't done for you". This was not easy, but I managed it. After years of anger and pain, I saw beyond that and looked at the things that I did have. I believe that is why I am on my way to being a self-actualized person. All of my first priority needs had been met by my mother and, as an adult, I am able to put things behind me and strive to be all I can be.

Notice I said, *as an adult*, for we can not expect children to do this without the proper guidance. I had to first understand why I was so angry, and then I was able to deal with it more effectively. Some children do not understand, and they love everyone because mom says to do so. Then, as they grow older they begin to understand the spirit of the message, and not just the letter of it.

They can be helped, and we can help them. We, society and moms, must and can help ameliorate these impacts of fatherlessness.

Recommendations

This particular topic should be researched more. Fatherlessness is happening all over the world, and is an issue that should be given more attention. Children are not to blame, most of the time it is a factor in the home that should be looked at more closely.

Studies should be conducted to determine just how many children do triumph over these impacts. Most of the statistics that have been printed are negative, but that is not always the case.

If fatherlessness is going to continue, then everything about it should be reexamined. The child isn't a bad thing and can grow up to be just as bright and capable as any child. Research that is conducted should be geared toward finding support for the single-mother and the child, as well as the father.

Additional research can be done with different populations that are impacted by fatherlessness. Research can compare subjects within this group instead of people that are totally different.

REFERENCES

Biller, H. B. (1974). <u>Paternal deprivation: Family, school, sexuality,</u>

   <u>and society</u>. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Biller, H. B. (1976). The father and personality development:

   Paternal deprivation and sex role development. In Lamb, M.E.

   (Ed.), <u>The role of the father in child development</u> (pp. 89-156).

   New York, NY: Wiley-Interscience Publication.

Blankerhorn, D. (1995). <u>Fatherless america: Confronting our most</u>

   <u>urgent social problem</u>. New York, NY: Basic Books.

DiCaprio, N. S. (1974). <u>Personality theories: Guides to living</u>.

   Philadelphia, PA: W.B. Saunders Company.

Ewen, R. B. (1993). <u>An introduction to theories of personality</u> (4th

   ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Feist, J. (1990). Theories of personality (2nd ed.). Fort Worth, TX: Holt

   Rinehart & Winston.

Ford, J. (1995). <u>Wonderful ways to love a child</u>. Berkeley, CA: Conari

   Press.

Frager, R. & Fadiman, J. (1984). <u>Personality and personal growth</u> (2nd

   ed.). New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Gouke, M. N. & Rollins, A. M. (1990). <u>One-parent children, the</u>

   <u>growing minority: A research guide</u>. New York, NY: Garland

   Publishing, Inc.

Hamilton, M. C. (1977). Father's influence on children. Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall, Inc.

Hammerslough, J. (1990). Everything you need to know about teen motherhood. New York, NY: The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc.

Hargreaves, M. B. (1991). Learning under stress: Children of single parents and the schools. Metuchen, NJ: Women's Action Alliance, Scarecrow Press.

Hjelle, L. A. & Ziegler, D. J. (1981). Personality theories: Basic assumptions, research and application (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Klein, S. B. (1982). Motivation: Biosocial approaches. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Lamb, M. E. (1976). The role of the father: An overview. In Lamb, M. E. (Ed), The role of the father in child development (pp. 1-61). New York, NY: Wiley-Interscience Publication.

Maslow, A. H. (1970). Motivation and personality (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Maslow, A. H. (1964). Religions, values, and peak-experiences. Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press.

McLanahan, S. & Sandefur, G. (1994). Growing up with a single-parent: What hurts, what helps. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Popenoe, D. (1996). <u>Life without father: Compelling new evidence</u> <u>that fatherhood and marriage are indispensable for the good of</u> <u>children and society</u>. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Scofield, C. I. (Ed.). (1967). <u>The new scofield study bible: Holy Bible</u>. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

United States Congress, Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, Subcommittee on Children and Families. (May 23, 1996). <u>Encouraging responsible fatherhood: Hearing before the</u> <u>subcommittee on children and families of the committee on</u> <u>labor and human resources, U. S. Senate, One Hundred Fourth</u> <u>congress, second session, on examining initiatives to encourage</u> <u>responsible fatherhood</u>. Washington, DC: U. S. G. P. O.

Urdang, L. (1968). <u>The random house dictionary of the english</u> <u>language-The unabridged edition</u>. New York, NY: The Riverside Press.

<u>Webster's new world dictionary of american language with student</u> <u>handbook</u> (concise ed.). (1974). Nashville, TN: The Southwestern Company.

<u>Webster's new world dictionary</u> (school ed.). (1992). Cleveland, OH: Modern Curriculum Press.