Today’s piece was prepared by Jonathan Lee, MD based on a Wall Street Journal article [Moms, Let Dad Be Dad](https://www.wsj.com/articles/what-dads-play-does-for-kids-1434476561).

In the article, the author describes research conclusions by a Kent State University psychologist that fathers play a unique and important role in child development. In general, dads tend to "stir up challenges," joke, and engage in physical play in order to develop a close bond with their children, while moms tend to soothe, comfort, and affectionately touch their children. There may be a physiologic explanation for these behaviors attributable to unique hormonal responses and to differences in neurologic activation between the sexes. While these are generalizations, and both sexes are equally capable of using different behaviors at different times, it is helpful for parents to recognize that their roles are often unique and complementary. Since much of the research to date on bonding has been based on observation of mother-child interactions, it is also important that ongoing research recognize the wide array of means through which closeness between parent and child is developed. The article summarizes this by recognizing that "criteria for good parenting aren’t always the same for moms and dads."

As far as this article’s persuasiveness to readers, it is a well balanced article, both alluding to scientific literature as well as drawing from common experiences of parenting. It offers few conclusions beyond what the title already says, and spends most of its body presenting facts. It gives a voice to and provides tools for expressing what many parents feel intuitively, although doesn’t discuss research methods (e.g., functional imaging) or recruitment bias (e.g., difficulty in recruiting fathers and possible differences between fathers who would choose to participate vs. those who did not).

**RESOURCES ON FATHERS & PARENTING:**

*There are a number of great parenting resources out there which acknowledge the specific roles of fathers. Two solid resources:*

[Washington State Father's Network](fathersnetwork.org) For children with special needs, this site promotes the impact of fathers.

[Lives in the Balance](livesinthebalance.org) A fantastic resource that offers tools to deal with behavioral challenges, and a number episodes of its radio programs are specifically addressed to dads.

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!