Introduction

• Across all cultures, maternal instincts are different from paternal instincts, but neither is necessarily better or worse.
• The face of families has changed dramatically over the past few decades, including the parenting roles of men and women.
• The desire to feel emotionally connected to one's children is very often the same for fathers and mothers, though it's expressed through different styles, hues, shades and degrees.
Introduction

• This workshop will explore some of the rich differences between the two styles, and explain the importance of both masculine and feminine approaches to parenting.

• This information should NEVER be used to diminish single mothering, single fathering or same sex parenting.
Introduction

• Research across many cultures shows that “father play” is qualitatively and quantitatively different from “mother play”, particularly around rough and tumble play and risk taking, which encourages children to push limits and explore the world around them more curiously.

Videos

Let’s watch three brief videos from Jay Leno entitled “The Difference Between Moms and Dads”:

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2HHWtRjo_E
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DamW6Kc-8
• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RqZfDlHVnAw
Distinctions

- Fathers assist with the separation experience of the child from their “beacon of orientation.” He serves as a second adult to learn from and to provide support to balance the powerful pull of the mother. He does this by being interesting, with a different smell, feel, temperament, voice, size and rhythms.
**Distinctions**

- In many cultures, mothers are often more tuned into a baby's specific needs than a father is. There is simply an emotional connection between mother and child that is different than the emotional connection between a father and child.

**Distinctions**

- Fathers tend to focus less on making a child feel good or secure and more on challenging them and helping them prepare to cope with the real world. They may seem to be "too tough" to the moms, but their toughness is rooted in helping kids be prepared for real life.
Distinctions

- Moms tend to be self-sacrificing from the moment she realizes that she is pregnant. She sees her role as maternal nurturer and makes daily sacrifices for each of her children over the long haul.
Distinctions

• Fathers tend to be self-sacrificing in his overall perspective. He sacrifices by working long hours outside the home, taking a second job or ‘stepping up to the plate’ to sacrifice for the whole family, rather than for the individual child.

Parenting Style Preferences

Paternal
- More often holds baby at arms length, makes eye contact, tosses in air, turns her back against his chest or props her shoulder, underscoring a sense of freedom and exploration

Maternal
- More often picks up her infant, wraps baby close to breasts, limits movements providing a sense of comfort, calm, warmth, and security
**Parenting Style Preferences**

**Paternal**
- Pick up their infant 50% of time just to “make something happen”
- Less predictable and more activating in physical style and interactions

**Maternal**
- Most times pick up their infant to tend to their care.
- Follow personal established patterns of physical style and interactions
Parenting Style Preferences

By one month of age, a mother has a distinctive way of holding her baby, and she holds him that way nine times out of ten.

A father, on the other hand, will pick up his infant nine different ways out of ten.

Parenting Style Preferences

A mother will typically use objects from her environment to interact with her infant- a toy, game, book, doll, puzzle, etc.

A father will typically make use of his body when interacting with his infant- roughhousing, tickling, wrestling, etc. He becomes the jungle gym, the monkey bars, the rocking horse, and gives piggy back rides.

Parenting Style Preferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paternal</th>
<th>Maternal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will stress physical risk-taking</td>
<td>Will stress emotional security and personal safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will play to push the child to higher level, to challenge the child to take risks</td>
<td>Is inclined to play at the child’s level. Will let child direct the play, be in charge, to proceed at child’s own pace</td>
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Parenting Style Preferences

**Paternal**
- More likely to promote young child’s social and intellectual development through physical play
- Play is less predictable, following activation-exploration themes

**Maternal**
- More likely to promote intellectual and social development through talking teaching while care giving
- Play is more conventional, employing traditional games, songs and themes
Parenting Style Preferences

**Paternal**
- Offers less immediate support in face of the child’s frustration, thus promoting adaptive problem-solving competencies

**Maternal**
- Likely to intervene more quickly in face of child’s frustration

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Parenting Style Preferences

**Paternal**
- Disciplines with an interest in the societal bottom-line outcome
  - Teaches through example, emphasizing lessons learned from experience

**Maternal**
- Disciplines with focus upon impact of behavior on emotional relationships
  - Teaches with focus on the process of learning
Parenting Style Preferences

**Paternal**
Predilection for action with children
Tends to prefer physical play and stimulation

**Maternal**
Predilection for caring for children
Tends to prefer instructional activities

Parenting Style Preferences

**Paternal**
Fathers tend to focus on helping their children with emotional regulation
Fathers encourage independence

**Maternal**
Mothers tend to focus on helping their children with emotional expression
Mothers encourage security
What Happens When Dad is Left Alone with the Baby

What Happens When Dad is Left Alone with the Baby

What Happens When Dad is Left Alone with the Baby
What Happens When Dad is Left Alone with the Baby

Autonomy

- Moms tend to see the rest of the world in relation to their children
- Dads tend to see their children in relation to the rest of the world
Autonomy

- Mom’s emphasis: Protect my child from getting hurt by the “outside world” such as from dangerous strangers, disease, lightning, mean dogs, bullies, car accidents, falls, etc.

- Dad’s emphasis: Prepare my child to cope with the harshness of the “outside world”, dealing with the same dangers.
Autonomy

- Fathers help baby differentiate one’s own self from one’s own mother’s self. That is why babies decisively turn to dad in their second year, as they practice their personal autonomy and pursue differentiation from the mom.

Anticipatory Behavior

- At six weeks, infants can distinguish their fathers’ voice from their mothers’ voice. While a quiet and alert infant will attend more quickly to a mother’s voice, an upset or fretting infant will calm more readily to a father’s voice.
- In a split screen study of 8 week-old infants seated comfortably, researchers noted significant differences in the infant’s response to an approaching parent.
**Anticipatory Behavior**

- When infant sees her mom approaching, her eyes narrow, her shoulders relax, and her heartbeat and respiration decrease. The infant becomes calm in the presence of her mother.

- When infant sees her dad approaching, her eyes widen, her shoulders rise, and heartbeat and respiration increase. The infant becomes stimulated in the presence of her father.

**Play**

- Mothers are quieter in play, while fathers tend to be louder and more boisterous.

- Mothers tend to cuddle and soothe their babies, while fathers prefer to bounce and excite their babies.

- Mothers calm their children, while fathers chase and play “scary monster” with them.
When parents roughhouse with their kids, the bonding chemical oxytocin is released. Perhaps because they're more comfortable with aggression overall, dads seem to be less ruffled by their children's aggression. Fathers are less upset by the hitting, biting and temper tantrums that are inevitable during the toddler years, but take responsibility for instilling impulse-control.
Transitions

Babies become aware that dads typically aren’t around as much as moms. They seem to pop up at odd times. They learn about comings and goings, transitions, separations, and a different nurturing (paternal) style.

Frustration

- When a young child is upset, mothers tend to get down on the child’s level and soothe the child.
- When a young child is upset, fathers tend to get down on the child’s level and redirect the child.

Communication Styles

- “Wat a widdle cutie wootie! Whose my widdle baybee?” Mothers tend to simplify and slow their speech to get and hold their infant’s or toddler’s attention, using “motherese.”
Communication Styles

- Fathers use bigger words and longer sentences spoken in less rhythmic sequences, showing a reluctance to baby his child. Fathers tend to act as a bridge between the tiny world of a child and the wider world he or she will eventually enter.

Communication Styles

- Fathers tend to issue more commands and do less describing, and they also tend to ask more what, where and who questions to their toddlers. All those w-questions mean tots talk more, use a wider range of vocabulary and produce longer phrases when with Daddy.
Communication Styles

- Father’s talk tends to be more brief, directive and to the point. He also makes greater use of facial expression and body language.

- Mothers tend to be more descriptive, personal, and verbally encouraging.

- Both approaches benefit healthy child communication

Independence

- Infants who have time alone with their dad show richer social and exploratory behavior than children not exposed to such experiences.

- Fathers help children to individuate- he is typically more willing to let a child out of his sight than the mom will. A father will let the child crawl twice as far as mom will before retrieving the infant.
Independence

- One of the most critical roles that a dad plays in the life of his child in the toddler years (18 to 42 months) is helping the child safely and securely separate from the intense maternal dependency of infancy.
- Fathers have a slight proclivity to encourage their pre-schoolers of both genders to play with sex-types toys.

Autonomy

- When the child confronts a novel situation, a dog, a stranger, a new toy, moms instinctively move closer, offering the reassurance of her familiar presence.
- In the same situation, fathers tend to stay back and allow the child to explore it for herself. He typically stands three times the distance that mom will.
Gender Identity

- Fathers contribute significantly to help shape gender identity. They offer the male view of the world. He helps his children distinguish masculinity from femininity. How he treats mom and how mom treats dad influence how children expect to relate to adults later on.

Empathy

Norma Radin’s research found that the strongest predictor of a child’s healthy empathic concern for others in adult life was a high level of positive involvement by the father in child rearing. This clearly contributes to their conscience formation and moral development.
Self Control

- Fathers shape children’s impulse control. Second children, especially boys, learn to keep their aggressive impulses in check through interaction with and observations of a male figure in the home that consistently controls himself in safe and appropriate ways.

Transitions

- Dads help kids transition to the adult world. This is especially critical for boys whose transition requires that they be affirmed as “man enough.” If not, he may try through sexual conquests, fighting, drinking, power struggles, coercion and other inappropriate ways.

Parenting Adolescents

- It’s often difficult for mothers, used to being a nurturer, to become a strict disciplinarian, especially with a surly teenager who is now taller and looms over her. Mothers, loaded with estrogen and oxytocin, tend to be peacemakers.
Parenting Adolescents

- When fathers try to discipline sons, the mother may be tempted to try to be a mediator rather than support the father. This can infuriate the father, who sees her as undermining his authority.

Conclusion

- Experts tend to see the parenting contributions of mothers and fathers as linked to their gender, with mothers generally emphasizing connection, safety, and care, and fathers emphasizing autonomy, action, risk-taking and following rules.

Conclusion

- "It's clear that most American children suffer too much mother and too little father." — Gloria Steinem

- "My father didn't tell me how to live. He lived it and let me watch him do it."

- "Kids spell love T-I-M-E." — John Crudele
**Conclusion**

- If it can't be fixed by duct tape or WD-40, it's a female problem. ~Jason Love

- “Before I got married I had six theories about bringing up children; now I have six children, and no theories.” ~John Wilmot

**Wrap up**

- Describe one or two distinctions you learned in this presentation that you like and that makes sense in your life.

- Describe one step you can take to apply any new ideas you learned here.

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