

A loving father is 'more important to children'

A father's love is just as important, if not more so, than a mother's, a study has suggested.



Photo: Getty Images

By Telegraph reporters

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Children were more likely to be insecure, hostile and aggressive if they did not have a loving father present, researchers claim.

A study found that rejection by either parent has a profound effect on the development of children which lasts into adulthood. And a father's love is just as important to a child's personality as a mother's – and sometimes more so.

The researchers said that children tend to respond in a similar way when they believe they have been rejected by their parents – with negative personality traits following them into adulthood. These can include aggression, anxiety, insecurity and hostility.

Prof Ronald Rohner, of the University of Connecticut, said that research had focused on mothers, but fathers were equally important.

"The great emphasis on mothers and mothering has led to an inappropriate tendency to blame mothers for children's behaviour problems and maladjustment when, in fact, fathers are often more implicated than mothers in the development of problems such as these," he said

Researchers looked at 36 studies involving 10,000 participants. The studies were based on surveys of children and adults about their parents' degree of acceptance or rejection in childhood.

The results, published in *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, suggest children and adults experience the same level of acceptance or rejection from each parent, but the influence of one parent's rejection, mostly a father, can be greater.

Researchers believe this could be because children are more likely to pay more attention to the parent they feel has higher prestige. If a child perceives their father to have more prestige, he will be more influential.

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