A study of 27 preschoolers found that popular children are more likely to have fathers who are physically playful, affectionate, and socially engaging and mothers who are highly verbal.

How do fathers and mothers differ?

Your child’s recognition of the differences between mother and father care actually enhances his development.

—Kyle Pratt, MD
Fatherseed

**Questions of equality**

**Actions items**

Women tend to play with their kids in a more structured manner than men do. Is one style better than the other?

One of the truths in life is that men and women are different, and that means moms and dads, too. A child has as much fun playing with a father, even if it is not planned out or structured—and the child is learning. By simply allowing a child to be a part of whatever task a father is involved in gives him the chance to explore, learn, and build. Structured time together can be beneficial because kids like routines, but they enjoy spontaneity, too.

Men, more so than women, tend to encourage persistence when it comes to learning new things. Is it detrimental to be more demanding?

Research shows that fathers, more than moms, tend to challenge their children and encourage them to be persistent when facing a difficult task, and that such lessons translate into social and academic confidence later in their lives. Although letting a child get too frustrated while trying to accomplish a task can be detrimental to learning, if an adult can figure out just how far to push and when to give in, he will help her understand the benefits of pushing through a hard task and build self-esteem.