

# 1996 NCF / Gallup Poll

## "FATHERS IN AMERICA"

### Recognition of the problem is growing

**"The most significant family, or social problem facing America is the physical absence of the father from the home."**

- Strongly agree 28.4%
- Agree 50.7%
- (Combined agreement: 79.1%)
- Disagree 16.1%
- Strongly disagree 1.9%
- (Combined disagreement: 18.0%)

### 1992 Gallup Poll response to the above question:

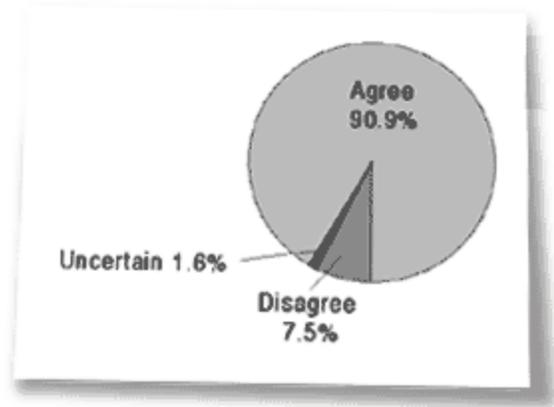
- Strongly agree 15.4%
- Agree 54.5%
- (Combined agreement: 69.9%)
- Disagree 26.9%
- Strongly disagree 1.5%
- (Combined disagreement: 28.4%)

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## Overwhelming agreement on need for both parents

**"It's important for children to live in a home with both their mother and father."**

- Strongly agree 53.7%
- Agree 37.2%
- (Combined agreement: 90.9%)
- Disagree 6.4%
- Strongly disagree 1.1%
- (Combined disagreement: 7.5%)

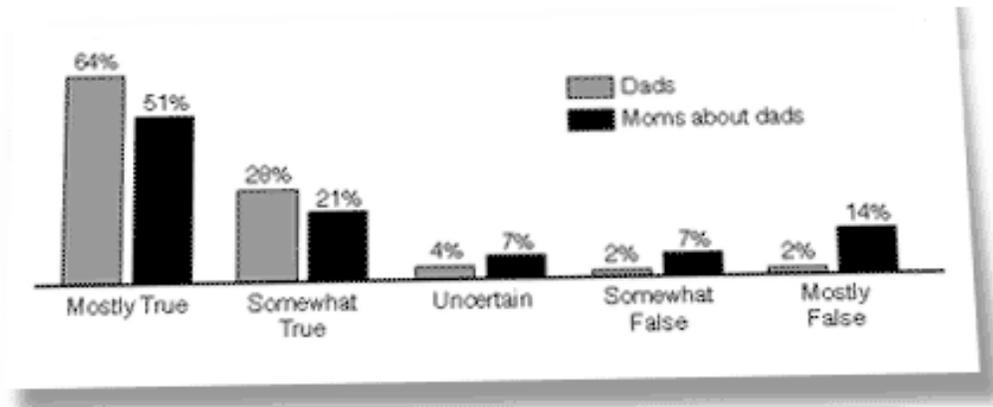


**"Fathers make unique contributions to their children's lives."**

- Strongly agree 43.2%
- Agree 47.1%
- (Combined agreement: 90.3%)
- Disagree 5.7%
- Strongly disagree 1.9%
- (Combined disagreement: 7.6%)

## Need for increase in fathering skills

**"You have a good handle on how your child's needs change as he or she grows up."**



**"Most fathers know what is going on in their children's lives."**

- Strongly agree 4.0%
- Agree 38.7%
- Disagree 47.8%
- Strongly disagree 6.2%

**"You express affection to your children." (fathers only)**

- Strongly agree 83.1%
- Agree 12.8%
- Disagree 1.5%
- Strongly disagree 0.6%

(percentages may not total 100 percent because of those who refused to answer or responded "don't know.")

**Fathers impact adult life**

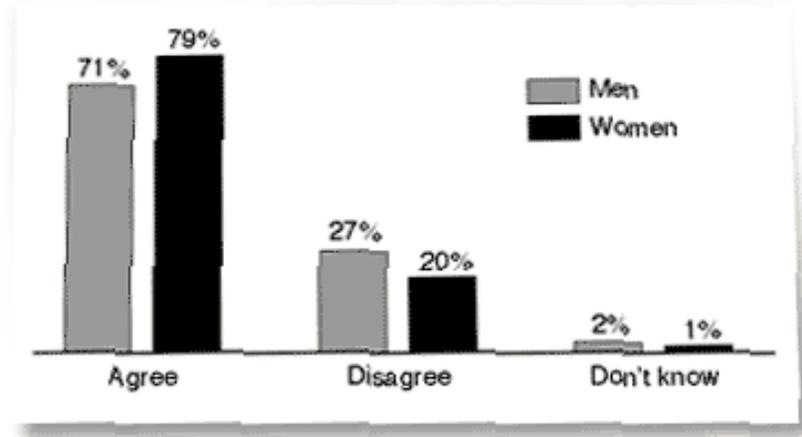
Three items in the NCF/Gallup poll measured the level of tension adults feel toward their fathers. Although it is difficult to admit any estrangement from a parent, men and women are recognizing a tension in relationships with their fathers, according to the results. Only 26% percent of men were strongly confident they could talk freely with their fathers:

**"I can talk freely with my father."**

	Men	Women
Strongly agree	26%	31%
Agree	50%	38%
Strongly disagree	4%	6%
Disagree	17%	22%
Don't know	1%	1%
Not Applicable	2%	1%

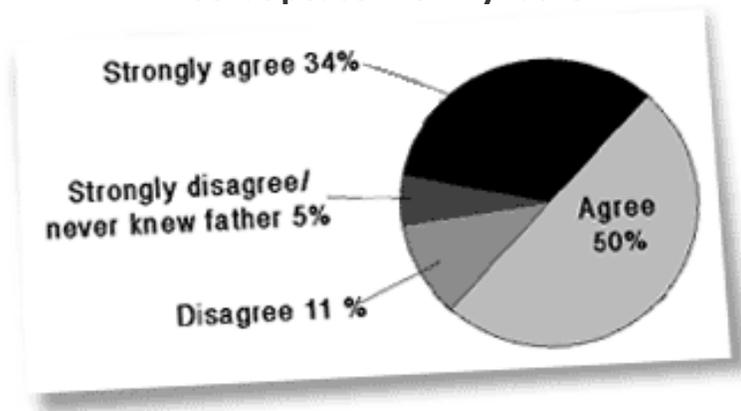
The results offer an interesting contrast between men and women—women were less likely to feel free to talk with their father, but more women than men knew what their fathers felt toward them during their childhood:

**"As a child you knew what your father felt about you."**



Significantly, only one-third of the men surveyed could say with assurance that they felt at peace with their fathers:

**"I feel at peace with my father."**



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All of the above findings help to explain why a majority agreed:

**"Most people have unresolved problems with their fathers."**

- Strongly agree 6.8%
- Agree 47.3%
- (Combined agreement: 54.1%)
- Disagree 36.5%
- Strongly disagree 2.8%
- (Combined disagreement: 39.3%)

## **The Work-Family Challenge**

Two questions measured the degree to which employers understood the tension between work and family demands.

**"Your employer recognizes the strain you face between the demands of your family and the demands of work." (results for men)**

- Mostly true 36.4%
- Somewhat true 18.7%
- (Combined true: 69.9%)
- Uncertain 9.8%
- Somewhat false 12.8%
- Mostly false 14.9%
- (Combined false: 28.4%)

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**"If your employer implemented more family-friendly policies, you would be more productive at work."**

	Dads	Moms about Dads
Mostly true	40.2%	33.8%
Somewhat true	20.9%	17.3%
Somewhat false	10.4%	6.2%
Mostly false	8.1%	9.9%

### **Demographics and Methodology**

A random national sampling of 793 adults was conducted from January 11-18, 1996 by the Gallup Organization of Princeton, New Jersey, for the National Center for Fathering (NCF). The survey results came from telephone interviews and have a sampling error of plus or minus 4 percentage points. (In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting a survey can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.) Demographic weighting was applied to the data in order to bring the demographic characteristics of the sample into line with the most recently available Census Bureau estimates to which these results are projected, that is, the total population of adults (age eighteen and older) living in telephone households in the continental United States. Of the respondents, 39% had children under age eighteen, and 45% had children over eighteen. (The two groups obviously overlap.) Of the parents surveyed, 58% had children living with them, and 10% had children under eighteen but not living with them. Among the fathers, 17% had adopted or step-children.