

Dads Talk About Their Daughters

A Roper Poll Conducted for Dads & Daughters

April, 2004



Survey Method

Screening criteria

- American men (18+) in contiguous United States
- Have daughter of any age
- No one in household works for an advertising, public relations, or marketing research company

Sampling

- A random digit dialing (RDD) sampling method was used to ensure a representative sample of American fathers of daughters across regions and demography

Interviewing

- A total of 424 interviews were conducted from April 16-18 and 23-25, 2004
- All interviews were conducted by telephone (CATI) as part of NOP World's weekly omnibus.
- Interviews were conducted by NOP World interviewers at a company owned and operated interviewing facility
- Each interview took, on average, 6 minutes to administer



Survey Method (Cont'd.)

Weighting

- Data were weighted to national gender, age, region, and education Census/CPS norms to correct for slight sampling error

Projectability of findings and margins of error

- Topline findings from this survey are projectable to the general population within +/- 5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level

Notes

- In the tables, please note the following:
 - * = <0.5%
 - - = 0%
 - Boxes color coded **red** are significantly lower than some or all of the other boxes in its row at the 95% confidence level
 - Boxes color coded **green** are significantly higher than some or all of the other boxes in its row at the 95% confidence level
- Fathers of more than one daughter were asked to answer questions about their oldest daughter
- Fathers responding about daughters age 26 and above were asked to answer the questions by reflecting back on their daughter when she was in her teenage years



Key Findings

The nature of the relationship

- **American dads and their daughters appear to be getting along fine -- three in four dads (74%) say their relationship is either “excellent, no issues come to mind,” or “very good, but with a few minor issues”**
 - Interestingly, fathers least likely to say the relationship is at least “very good” are those with daughters age 26 and over. This is likely a function of the fact that daughters of that age are out of the house and the relationship is less interactive than in the past
 - Over half of fathers (55%) who have an “excellent” relationship with their daughter say having a daughter is “one of the most satisfying experiences of my life.” Only one in three (29%) of those with no better than a “good” relationship say the same thing
- **How could dads improve the father-daughter relationship? Asked to identify approaches from a list of items, they are most likely to say they should:**
 - “Spend more time her” (34%) -- especially those who have a daughter age 18 to 25
 - “Better communicate my thoughts and feelings to her” (23%) -- especially those with daughters age 13-17
 - “Do a better job understanding her point of view” (22%)
- **Asked how they would describe being a father, many agree that their “active involvement is vital to her health and well-being,” (33%-- 45% of those with daughters under 17)**
 - Fathers with less than a “very good” relationship with their daughter are less likely to agree (28%).
 - Fathers with an “excellent” relationship with their daughter are less inclined than those with less successful relationships to say “mothers are naturally better at parenting girls” (10% versus 18% of the total)



Key Findings (Cont'd.)

Protecting our daughters

- **Asked to select from a list of items the “biggest obstacles to girls’ happiness,” dads of daughters are most likely to choose:**
 - Unequal treatment and discrimination (37% -- especially those with teenage daughters and daughters age 26 and over)
 - Popular culture, such as music, TV and fashion that emphasizes appearance and sex appeal over character and accomplishment (36% -- especially those with daughter under age 18)
 - Pressure to be thin (25% -- particularly those with teenage daughters)
 - Physical or sexual harassment or abuse (25% -- a concern no matter what age the daughter is)
- **These concerns are generally shared among fathers irrespective of the quality of their relationship with their daughters**

- **Asked to select from a list of items the things that “scare” them most regarding their daughters, dads are most likely to choose:**
 - Physical or sexual assault (33% -- especially those with daughters age 12 or under)
 - She won’t find a good man who take care of her (22%)
 - She won’t have a loving and equitable relationship (21%)
- **As with the obstacles, these concerns are generally shared among fathers irrespective of the quality of their relationship with their daughters**



Key Findings (Cont'd.)

Talking about sexuality

- **Most dads of daughters feel at least “fairly comfortable” talking to their daughters about matters of sex and sexuality (66%). But fewer than half -- 35% -- say they feel “very comfortable”**
 - Perhaps not surprisingly, dads with less than “very good” relationships with their daughter are least likely to say they feel at least fairly comfortable talking about the subject (49% compared to 75% of those with an “excellent” or “very good” relationship)
- **What would make talking about sex and sexuality with daughters easier? Having the mother participate in the discussion is the favored solution (44%) by at least a three to one margin over other options**



Detailed Findings:

The Nature of the Relationship



More Time Together, Better Communication Keys to Building a Better Relationship (by Age of Daughter)

Base: Fathers of daughters (n=424)

	Age of daughter(s)				
	Total	≤12	13-17	18-25	26+
(Unweighted base)	(424)	(123)	(63)*	(115)	(203)
	%	%	%	%	%
Spend more time with her	34	35	25	43	31
Better communicate my thoughts and feelings to her	23	22	32	25	21
Do a better job understanding her point of view	22	22	24	19	23
Be more approachable to talk about things	20	29	23	12	18
Trust her judgment more	19	21	30	20	14
Become more interested in her interests	17	23	24	15	13
Be less judgmental about her lifestyle and aspirations	16	14	15	21	17
None	9	7	4	11	11
Refused	2	3	--	2	4
Don't know	4	3	--	6	5

“Regardless of the quality of your current relationship with your daughter, please tell me which two or three of the following are things you could do that would most strengthen your relationship. First...” (Q.6)



*Caution: small base.

Active Involvement With Daughter Is Most Important in the Early Years, According to Dads (by Age of Daughter)

Base: Fathers of daughters (n=424)

	Age of daughter(s)				
	Total	≤12	13-17	18-25	26+
(Unweighted base)	(424)	(123)	(63)*	(115)	(203)
	%	%	%	%	%
My active involvement is vital to her health and well-being	33	45	44	29	26
Mothers are naturally better at parenting girls	18	11	12	18	26
It's no different than raising a son	14	9	15	23	15

“Which one or two statements best describe being a father to a daughter, in your opinion?” (Q.3)



*Caution: small base.

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Detailed Findings: Protecting Our Daughters



Biggest Obstacles to Happiness Facing Girls, According to Dads (by Age of Daughter)

Base: Fathers of daughters (n=424)

	Age of daughter(s)				
	Total	≤12	13-17	18-25	26+
(Unweighted base)	(424)	(123)	(63)*	(115)	(203)
	%	%	%	%	%
Unequal treatment and discrimination	37	30	44	34	43
Popular culture, such as music, TV, and fashion that emphasizes appearance and sex appeal over their character and accomplishment	36	46	42	31	29
Pressure to be thin	25	24	42	26	19
Physical or sexual harrassment or abuse	25	26	31	25	24
Seeing women treated as objects in advertising	23	29	19	30	19
None	6	8	7	2	6
Refused	3	2	2	2	4
Don't know	9	5	4	8	12

"Which two or three of the following do you think are the greatest obstacles to girls' happiness? First..." (Q.8)



*Caution: small base.

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Greatest Fears Regarding Daughters (by Age of Daughter)

Base: Fathers of daughters (n=424)

	Age of daughter(s)				
	Total	≤12	13-17	18-25	26+
(Unweighted base)	(424)	(123)	(63)*	(115)	(203)
	%	%	%	%	%
She may be physically or sexually assaulted	33	46	25	37	23
She won't find a good man who will take care of her	22	14	29	24	23
She won't have a loving and equitable relationship	21	23	21	21	16
She will get pregnant too young	18	25	29	13	13
She won't have a personally rewarding career	17	15	25	16	15
She will be judged more for her looks than her character	15	18	22	20	11
She won't have a happy or healthy sex life	4	2	4	5	4
None	11	5	8	9	16
Refused	3	2	2	2	3
Don't know	9	8	4	7	12

"Please tell me which two or three of the following scare you most. First..." (Q.7)



*Caution: small base.

Detailed Findings: Talking About Sexuality



Most Fathers Are at Least “Somewhat Comfortable” Talking About Sexuality With Their Daughters (by Age of Daughter)

Base: Fathers of daughters (n=424)

	Age of daughter(s)				
	Total	≤12	13-17	18-25	26+
(Unweighted base)	(424)	(123)	(63)*	(115)	(203)
	%	%	%	%	%
Very/fairly comfortable	66	68	73	75	60
Very comfortable	35	34	39	47	31
Fairly comfortable	31	34	34	28	30
Fairly/very uncomfortable	25	21	27	15	30
Fairly uncomfortable	16	14	14	12	17
Very uncomfortable	9	7	13	4	13
Refused	2	2	--	4	3
Don't know	7	9	--	6	7

“Generally speaking, how comfortable or uncomfortable do you feel talking to your daughter about matters of sex and sexuality?” (Q.4)



*Caution: small base.

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What Would Make Talking About Sex With Our Daughters Less Difficult? (by Age of Daughter)

Base: Fathers of daughters (n=424)

	Age of daughter(s)				
	Total	≤12	13-17	18-25	26+
(Unweighted base)	(424)	(123)	(63)*	(115)	(203)
	%	%	%	%	%
Having her mother participate in the conversation with me	44	49	40	51	40
Having the ability to talk about other issues before talking about it	14	12	13	17	13
Having a better understanding of what girls her age know about sexuality	11	20	12	9	7
Feeling that others think it's healthy/normal to have this discussion	7	2	11	4	9
Access to age-appropriate talking points	5	6	8	3	4
None	7	4	8	6	8
Refused	3	3	--	3	3
Don't know	11	4	7	6	16

"And which of the following, if any, would most help you be more comfortable talking to your daughter about matters of sex and sexuality? How about..."(Q.5)



*Caution: small base.

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