

Calling all fathers

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Single parenting is very prevalent in Jamaican and has long been seen as a disadvantageous way to raise children. Single parenting can occur as a result of the death of a parent, the absence of a parent due to migration and more popularly a parent neglects their responsibility, in particular the Jamaican father.

The Jamaican single parent family unit usually comprises a mother with a child or children. And typically the mother is unable to provide sufficiently for all the needs of her family. This is particularly the case when the mother is under/uneducated. T the extreme end there are mothers who are uneducated and earn minimum wage. They are living under the 'hand to mouth existence'. Because of this and the absence of the fathers, their children suffer from financial and emotional neglect. This can result in the child's inability to focus because of malnutrition and failure to perform at his or her best in school.

Fathers need to realise that their children need them. Children need the nurturing of both parents for a balanced life. Though many children survived on one parent (some of us can attest to this), the reality cannot be ignored that fathers are needed to build a strong family unit.

It is a fact that boys moreso than girls need their fathers for emotional support and also as a role model. The presence of fathers can help to reduce the level of violence played out by boys. Some of these acts of indiscipline are testament to the absence of a father figure in their lives.

Studies have shown that a girl's relationship with her father impacts her future relationships with men, in particular, the men she chooses to date or marry. Girls with little or not interactions with her father often tend to look for father figures in older men and can end up in illegal or immoral relationships with these older men.

Some fathers also need to realise that just paying the bills, the school fees and lunch money is not all. There should be the existence of a bond between a father and a son that consists of emotional support. Mothers will try to fill your gap but there is no possible way a mother can be a father too.

There are absolutely no excuses for your absence, fathers. Children did not ask to be here, they were put here partly by you so it is your duty to be there for your children. Mothers cannot bear the entire burden of bringing up a child. Simply put, for this Child's Month and beyond, fathers, your children need YOU!