



Boston College

BOSTON COLLEGE RESEARCHERS DISCOVER DADS CHOOSING AND FINDING FULFILLMENT AS AT-HOME DADS

CHESTNUT HILL, MA (June 11, 2012) – Stay-at-home dads are making a conscious choice and commitment to be home with their children to the benefit of their families, their wives' careers, and their own personal fulfillment, researchers from the Boston College Center for Work & Family report in the new study, ***The New Dad: Right at Home.***

The center's third report on fathers observed the impact of shifting gender roles through in-depth interviews with 31 at-home dads and surveys with 23 of their spouses. Counter to the viewpoint that more men are becoming at-home dads because they were laid off during the recession, men report choosing the role for pragmatic reasons ranging from income and career considerations to satisfying family life goals, according to center researchers.

"Contrary to media reports about laid off fathers who re-invent themselves as full-time caregivers, most of the men we interviewed report that being a stay-at-home dad is a choice, not simply a reaction to an unanticipated job loss," said study author Brad Harrington, Executive Director of the Center for Work & Family.

In addition to caring for their children, the researchers report that at-home dads are providing their spouses with critical supports to pursue their careers.

"The existence of at-home fathers greatly enables and facilitates the careers of their working wives or partners," said Harrington, who co-authored the study with the center's Senior Research Associate Fred Van Deusen, and Research Assistant Iyar Mazar. "The overwhelming response from wives was that having an at-home spouse had enabled these women to pursue their careers in a much more assertive fashion without the limitations that virtually all working mothers experience."

Like the center's two earlier reports – *The New Dad: Exploring Fatherhood within a Career Context* and *The New Dad: Caring, Committed and Conflicted* – the latest study finds the roles of men and women in relation to the workforce continue to change.

"Nearly all fathers are increasingly likely to experience active caregiving and the result will require employers to adapt their thinking and their actions regarding who needs support to do so adequately. This is not simply a women's issue," said Harrington.

The authors conclude with recommendations for fathers and families and implications for organizations.

For additional information about the findings and recommendations of the study, access the full report at www.bc.edu/cwf

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