

## Do chores together for better relationship

March 21 2013

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(Medical Xpress)—You may have heard of couples that strive for exact equality when it comes to chores, i.e. I scrub a dish, you scrub a dish, I change a diaper, you change a diaper.

But new research finds that keeping score with chores isn't the best path to a high-quality [relationship](#). Instead the data points to two items that should have a permanent place on a father's to-do list:

- Do [housework](#) alongside your spouse
- Spend quality time with the kids

"We found that it didn't matter who did what, but how satisfied people were with the division of labor," said Brigham Young University professor Erin Holmes. "We found that when wives are doing work together with their husbands, they are more satisfied with the division of labor."

Holmes and scholars from the University of Missouri and Utah State University authored the study for the *Journal of Family Issues*. They studied how 160 [couples](#) handled housework and child-rearing duties. The purpose of the research was to see what contributed to the quality of a marriage relationship.

The most significant factor was the quality of the fathers' relationship with their kids.

"For women, dad having a good relationship with the kids means that dad and mom are probably going to have a better relationship," Holmes said.

The study measured father involvement in a number of ways – playing with kids, engaging in shared interests and providing teaching moments.

"Something as simple as reading a book with your children every night and talking with them about their day can really go a long way," said Adam Galovan, a BYU grad who authored the study with Holmes.

Most of the parents were between the ages of 25 and 30 and all of the couples had a child age 5 or younger.

"This stage of life, where couples have young children, is potentially really challenging for couples," Holmes said.

In fact, previous research by Holmes shows that both husbands and wives dramatically increase their [household tasks](#) during the transition to parenthood. Typically dads do twice as much housework after the first baby arrives. Moms, however, do about five times more housework than before.

Though all isn't fair in love and chores, Holmes' statistical analysis suggests that there's truth to the saying: happy wife, happy life.

"When wives are satisfied with the division of labor, both spouses report higher marital quality," Holmes said.

To put that into practice, couples could merge some of the items on their individual to-do lists, whether that's dishes, laundry, or bedtime stories. And dads should be aware that when they strengthen bonds with their kids, everyone wins.

**More information:** [jfi.sagepub.com/content/early/ ...  
13X13479948.abstract](http://jfi.sagepub.com/content/early/.../13X13479948.abstract)

Provided by Brigham Young University

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