

**IMPRESSION OF THE RAISING OUR CHILDREN CONFERENCE  
BEING THE BEST FATHER TO OUR CHILDREN  
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*Father.* This one word evokes many emotions and meanings. For some, it conjures images of a protective, loving presence; for others, a mean or authoritarian one. *Father* also may represent what was experienced as missing, a palpable absence or emotional distance.

Fatherhood was the topic of discussion at one of the workshops offered at the recent Raising Our Children Conference at the Florida Nature and Culture Center.

Although mostly comprising fathers, some mothers attended the session also in the hopes of better understanding the role of men in the family.

The dialogue began with participants recognizing the significance of their own fathers in their lives. The flow of tears and laughter that ensued as we shared our stories indicated how important fathers are to the formation of who their children become.

The discussion also addressed the changing roles of fathers in society and the confusion and challenges that this has created for men and women engaged in the task of raising children.

Many participants agreed that there is a strong need for more dialogue on this topic so that the challenges of fatherhood can be better met for the happiness of generations to come.