

Sports 1, housework, 0

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Pressure to be more involved in their children's lives has many middle class men turning to sports as a way to nurture their kids. This softening of gender roles might be seen on the field, but researchers found it doesn't change traditional behavior at home – where household chores and other parenting responsibilities are still seen as mom's job.

"Women may be unhappy about this inequality, but at the same time they value the fact that their partners are involved with the [kids](#) -- even if it is mostly manifested on the soccer field," says Dr. Tamar Kremer-Sadlik, director of Programs of the Social Sciences Division at UCLA and co-author of the study *Fatherhood and Youth Sports: a Balancing Act between Care and Expectations*.

The study, co-authored with Prof. Lucas Gottzén-from Linköping University- Sweden, appears in the current issue of *Gender & Society*. Drawing on a large research project conducted by the UCLA Center on Everyday Lives of Families, the study ran from 2002 – 2005. It included middle-class families in the Los Angeles area (each with two to three children) and both parents working.

Researchers found that while some [fathers](#) may push their children to achieve athletically, they're trying to juggle that with nurturing their kids through sports and using time with the team to become emotionally closer to their kids -- whether by coaching or taking them to the games.

Still, when researchers studied how these families dealt with housework and childcare, they found that women "did the lion's share of these

tasks."

"Critical research on men, masculinities, and fathers' involvement in youth sports is limited. Many studies have looked at men and sports, but not how sports relates to fatherhood," says Kremer-Sadlik. "The fathers we studied are finding ways to create a new ideal of fatherhood, but they are not creating a new ideal with their partners."

Some fathers may even use involvement in their children's [sports](#) to get out of household chores and other parenting tasks.

Provided by Sociologists for Women in Society

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