

# Fatherhood Portrayal In Media

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Decade	Fatherhood Traits	Cultural Reflection
1960s	Wise, Moral, Firm	Idealized Father, Stability
1970s	Flawed, challenged	Emerging Feminism
1980s	Loving, Authoritative	Family Values, Racial Progress
1990s	Funny, Emotional	Egalitarian, Dad with a heart
2000s	Goofy, Secondary	Gender Role Reversals, Sarcasm
2010s	Diverse, Present	Inclusion, Modern Masculinity
2020s	Absent, Accessory	Child Independence, Varied Family types

## Media as a Mirror Not a Mold

1960s-1970s: This was a time of true social tension (civil rights, Vietnam, feminism). It was a time for media to portray family life as stable and traditional as society searched for stability. Sitcom dads were often perfect and would always respond appropriately to every situation that was presented to portray and project reassurance.

1980s-1990s: As dual-income families, divorce rates, and economic pressures grew, we saw more hands-on dads, blended families, and emotional growth and involvement. Media adapted to what families were actually experiencing.

2000s-2010s: Society began to openly question masculinity, gender roles, and authority figures. Sitcoms featured dads as flawed partners, emotionally accessible, often bumbling but well-intentioned.

2020s: Families today are extremely diverse-single parents, same-sex parents, no parents. Media, especially youth-focused platforms like Disney, increasingly reflect child-centered worlds where kids are empowered to lead, solve, and grow, often without a strong parental presence.

## Primetime Sitcoms And Their Portrayal of Fatherhood

### 1960s: The Idealized Father

- The Andy Griffith Show (1960-1968)
  - o Father provides morality, strong male leadership, gentle discipline.
- Leave It To Beaver (1957-1963)
  - o Father is a stern but loving provider, teaches values with calm authority.

### 1970s: Emerging Complexity

- All In The Family (1971-1979)
  - o Father is Bigoted, Loud, Flawed – but deeply human. Challenged by social change and wanting to stay the same.
- The Brady Bunch (1969-1974)
  - o Father was emphatic on harmony, fairness, and inclusion. Mild mannered father but still provided authority and stability.

### 1980s: The Moral Compass Dad

- Family Ties (1982-1989)
  - o Portrayal of different political views in the same home where father and son do not agree. Father is supportive and thoughtful.
- Family Matters (1989-1998)
  - o Father is responsible, protective, loving, no nonsense but loving.

### 1990s: Flawed but Funny Dad

- Home Improvement (1991-1999)
  - o Father is clumsy, macho, but loving and willing to change. Male stereotypes but also understanding and involved parenting.
- Fresh Prince of Bel-Air (1990-1996)
  - o Father is stern but deeply caring. Strong authority figure who teaches responsibility and love.
- Full House (1987-1995)
  - o Non-traditional household. Father shows emotional openness and fatherhood is a team effort.

### 2000s: Dad is a Goof or a Partner

- Everybody Love Raymond (1996-2005)
  - o Dad is clueless and immature but well meaning. Uninvolved in Parenting but still showing family life.
- Malcom In The Middle (200-2006)
  - o Dad is dysfunctional but loving. Clueless but well meaning.

### 2010s: Diversity and Inclusion

- Modern Family (2009-2020)
  - o Goofy, involved dad. As well as homosexual couple dads. Fatherhood is gruff, involved, co-parenting, inclusive, and open minded.
- Black-ish (2014-2022)
  - o Father is successful, present, wrestling with identity and cultural parenting.

### 2020s: Absent (Disney)

- Several Shows
  - o Jessie, The Suite Life, Liv and Maddie, I-Carly
  - o Father is absent from the show or peripheral. Kids are navigating the world independently or with minimal adult supervision.