



WATCH D.O.G.S. (Dads Of Great Students) is an innovative father involvement, educational initiative of the National Center For Fathering. There are two primary goals of the WATCH D.O.G.S. program.

- 1) To provide positive male role models for the students, demonstrating by their presence that education is important.
- 2) To provide extra sets of eyes and ears to enhance school security and reduce bullying.

WATCH D.O.G.S. began in 1998 in a single school in Springdale, Arkansas and has since grown into a national recognized program that has brought hundreds of thousands of fathers and father figures into the school classrooms and hallways across the country, creating millions of hours of "in school" volunteer time and having a tremendously positive impact on the educational process. Today more than 4,049 schools in 46 states plus DC participate in WATCH D.O.G.S. Currently, there are WATCH D.O.G.S. programs in China, Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Barbados.

Who Are WatchDOGS?

Watch DOGS are fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and other father-figures who volunteer for at least one day each year at an official WATCH D.O.G.S. school. During the day, Watch DOGS may read and work on flash cards with students, play at recess, eat lunch with students, watch the school entrances and hallways, assist with traffic flow and any other assigned activities where they actively engage with, not only their own students, but other students as well. Many school principals have reported that the mere presence of a Watch DOG dramatically reduces reports of bullying. On the day of their participation, Watch DOGS are given a brief review of their involvement and they wear an official WATCH D.O.G.S. t-shirt with a disposable 'Dog Tag' identifying them as WATCHDOGS.

How WATCH D.O.G.S. Works

WATCH D.O.G.S., a K-12 program, invites fathers, grandfathers, uncles, or other father figures to volunteer at least one full day at their child's/student's school during the

school year. Individuals sign up at a 'Launch Event' such as a "Dads and Kids Pizza Night" or "Donuts with Dad" or in the office at any time throughout the school year. The program is overseen by a "Top Dog" volunteer who partners with the school administrator to coordinate scheduling and identify opportunities for Watch DOGS to provide assistance at the school. Watch DOGS volunteers perform a variety of tasks during their volunteer day including monitoring the school entrance, assisting with unloading and loading of buses and cars, monitoring the lunch room, or helping in the classroom with a teacher's guidance by working with small groups of students on homework, flashcards, or spelling.

Program Effectiveness

During 2003, **WATCH D.O.G.S.** conducted a survey of 50 participating schools nationwide. Key findings:

- 89% agree that **WATCH D.O.G.S.** is a valuable component of the school's efforts to promote a safe and positive learning environment for students.
- 79% agree that since implementing the **WATCH D.O.G.S.** program, the school has experienced an increase in father involvement in areas other than **WATCH D.O.G.S.** (parent-teacher conferences, volunteerism in the classroom or after school, PTA involvement).

Program Benefits

- Students gain positive male role models.
- Schools gain an extra set of eyes and ears. The presence of a father or father figure will provide an additional deterrent to bullying, enhance a sense of security in the building, and will help to create an environment conducive to learning.
- Fathers get a glimpse of their students' everyday world and learn about the increasingly complex challenges and decisions today's youth are facing. As a result, they can learn to relate better to their student and hopefully connect with them.
- Fathers gain a greater awareness of the positive impact they can have on their student's life in three critical areas including: academic performance, self-esteem, social behavior.
- Due to budget shortfalls and cutbacks, often teachers are presented with larger classrooms each year. Fathers and father figures (aka Watch DOGS) provide real and important help for the teachers and the students.