

Takeaways for those who raise or care for boys

Parents, caregivers, boy moms, grandparents, foster parents, and chosen family



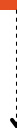
Your role in the ecosystem

Home shapes the rhythms of connection, stress, repair, and tenderness. Caregivers set the emotional temperature boys come to expect from relationships.



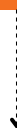
WAYS TO EXPAND POSSIBILITY

Let everyday routines become small invitations to connection; revisit tough mornings; name what helps you reset; use quiet moments to invite reflection.



WHAT BOYS LEARN HERE

How adults handle frustration, how people reconnect after tension, what happens when someone shuts down, and whether tenderness is welcomed or dismissed.



PLACES TO LOOK FOR INSPIRATION

Parenting models that prioritize emotional intelligence, mutual respect, and accountability.

The State of Masculinity 2025 is a project of A Call to Men. 25 years of violence prevention, healthy manhood, and culture change. Get the report and free resources at acalltomen.org.

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A Call to Action

Two invitations from the report to try at home

A CALL TO CONSIDER

REFLECT ON THE PROMPTS BELOW AS THEY RELATE TO YOUR EXPERIENCE OR CONTEXT.

- Where did I learn what “strength” looks like, and what did that definition cost me and the people around me?
- What emotions are “easy” for our household to hold? Which ones get redirected into anger, silence, or humor?
- In our home, is belonging more often given or earned? What would it take to shift one notch toward “given”?
- What is one small “repair practice” we could normalize this week (a real apology, a do-over, a check-in after conflict)?
- If I picture the adults the kids in my life will become, what do I hope they believe about love, softness, and asking for help?
- What are the boys I care for watching me practice?



Let the young person in your life watch you repair.

- Try one small, out-loud exercise this week.
- Name it. “I was short with you earlier. That wasn’t about you.”
- Say what’s next. Name one thing you’ll try differently. Keep it small and tangible
- Watch what shifts. Notice his response over the next few days.
- [Include Space to fill in:] “What I noticed:_____”

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From the Field: What We Heard In Our Interviews About Family Life



"Sometimes the 'head of household' idea becomes a kind of silence people live inside."

– Professor of Sociology, D.C.

"Pride in providing isn't the problem. The problem is when providing becomes permission to avoid everything else."

– Therapist, WA

"I can care for my child. I can care for my partner... I want men to conjugate that verb in all those spaces."

– Non-profit CEO, D.C.

"Parents are trying to keep their kids safe... but they're also exhausted, and that changes what 'being present' looks like."

– Non-profit Executive, MO

"Some kids don't have the adult at home who can model what repair looks like. So they learn it from whoever shows up."

– Community Leader, ME



"The economy... the grind... it shapes what people can offer at home, even when the love is there."

– Lawyer, D.C.

"Work takes the best of you, and your family gets what's left. People don't say it that clean, but they live it."

– NFL Player, OH

"That 'what goes on in this house stays in the house' language can sound like loyalty, but it can also be how pain survives."

– Survivor Advocate, NM



"I had a single father growing up, but I was always able to be affectionate with my father. I lived in a very privileged and safe household with my dad."

– Data Analyst, TX