

## FATHERS URGED TO JOIN EARLY CHILDCARE



In many homes across Taguig, Parañaque, and Pateros, fathers tend to step back from daily caregiving not because they don't want to help, but because caring for young children is still seen as the mother's job.

Local data from Save the Children Philippines shows this divide: 83.7% of fathers are seen primarily as income earners, while only 13.4% are actively involved in daily care routines like feeding, bathing, and supporting their child's development. In contrast, 86.6% of primary caregivers are women, handling most of the daily caregiving needs, particularly for children with disabilities.

"Fathers often opt out of child rearing not because they lack interest, but because society expects this to be a mother's role. Raising a child is a shared responsibility, and children thrive when all caregivers, regardless of gender, are actively involved," said Catherine Manzano, Save the Children Philippines' Education Manager.

To help change this, Save the Children launched the "Tatays in Action" campaign on Father's Day, in partnership with the City/Municipal Social Welfare and Development Offices (C/MSWD) in Parañaque, Pateros, and Taguig along with Mylo Speech Buddy. The initiative encourages fathers and male caregivers to take a more active role in early childhood care and development (ECCD), especially for children with developmental delays and disabilities.

"Fathers have always cared deeply for their children, but many have just not been given the chance or the space to be hands-on. Through this campaign, we want to show that fatherhood is not just about providing, but about being present in the everyday moments that shape a child's growth," said Manzano.

Save the Children Philippines, through its Project ABLE, is working closely with C/MSWD's ERPAT (Empowerment and Reaffirmation of Paternal Abilities and Traits), a program that organizes fathers at the barangay level. Starting late June, they aim to engage more than 60 fathers in parenting sessions that teach simple and practical ways to support their young child's growth and development at home, especially during the early years before school.

Through playful activities using everyday items, parents learn how to respond to their child's needs, build stronger bonds through daily routines, and share tips and experiences with other families.

In 2022, Save the Children Philippines championed Republic Act No. 11650, the "Inclusive Education Act," which laid the foundation for including children with disabilities in education and social services. The newly signed RA 12199 or the "ECCD Systems Act" builds on this by promoting inclusive care from birth, when intervention matters most.

To learn more about how Save the Children Philippines' programs help improve access to quality education for all children, including those with disabilities, visit [www.savethechildren.org.ph](http://www.savethechildren.org.ph).