

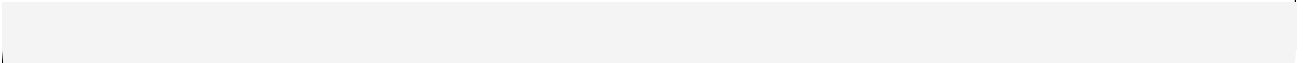
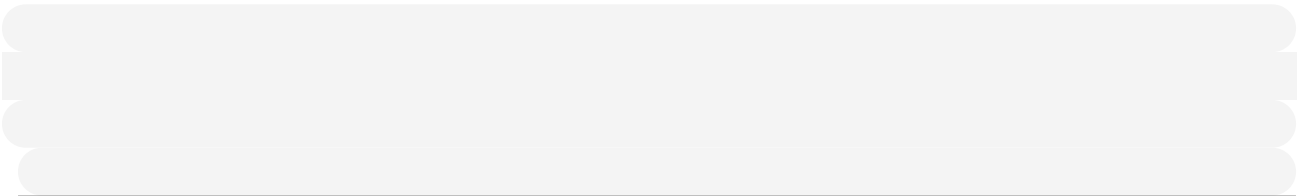
Prince William and the Fatherhood Secret America Could Use

Over the weekend, Kensington Palace released a sweet picture in honor of Prince William's birthday on June 21st. The photo featured William seated on a large, old-fashioned swing, his youngest son Louis on his lap, while his two older children, George and Charlotte, hang on behind him. William is flushed and laughing happily, while his children showcase the loving confidence of "hanging out with Daddy."

I smiled when I saw this picture, for it gave a glimpse of familial joy and affection that wasn't canned. One could only imagine the fun that went on behind the scenes of that one snapshot.



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The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge are very pleased to share a new picture of The Duke with Prince George, Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis ahead of The Duke's birthday tomorrow. The picture was taken earlier this month by The Duchess.

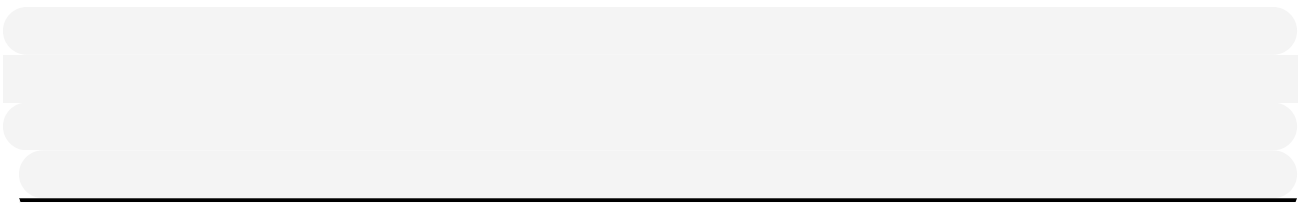
A post shared by [Duke and Duchess of Cambridge \(@kensingtonroyal\)](#) on Jun 20, 2020 at 2:30pm PDT

I didn't have long to imagine, for Kensington Palace released another photo showing George, Charlotte, and Louis all in a pile wrestling with their father. Although you can barely see their faces, the laughter is palpable. The children are having fun... and so is their father.





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Thank you everyone for your very kind wishes on The Duke of Cambridge's birthday today!

A post shared by [Duke and Duchess of Cambridge \(@kensingtonroyal\)](#) on Jun 21, 2020 at 8:00am PDT

But they're not just having fun. According to Drs. Anthony DeBenedet and Lawrence Cohen, roughhousing play between children and parents gives children a leg up on life. In [*The Art of Roughhousing*](#), these doctors detail several ways that rough and tumble play can help children learn and grow. These include:

1. Intelligence

Roughhousing "helps stimulate neuron growth," the authors write, thereby "building foundations for academic success."

2. Emotions

Children who roughhouse with their parents learn "about managing [their] emotions and accurately reading the emotions of others." "In good roughhousing," the authors explain, "you and your child practice revving up and calming down, which helps your child learn how to manage strong emotions."

3. Likability

Contrary to what most might think, kids experienced in roughhousing aren't the big, mean bullies that everyone hates. Instead, the authors claim, "Kids who roughhouse are almost always more physically and socially adept than those who don't."

4. Ethics

"When we roughhouse with our kids," the authors note, "we model for them how someone bigger and stronger holds back. We teach them self-control, fairness, and empathy. We let them win, which gives them confidence and demonstrates that winning isn't everything."

5. Fitness

This is the obvious one, for wrestling with dad obviously brings good exercise. But it brings more than that, DeBenedet and Cohen report, for roughhousing "requires complex motor learning, concentration, coordination, body control, cardiovascular fitness, and flexibility."

6. Happiness

As the pictures above show us, happiness is the natural outgrowth of a good playfight with dad. Just as “Animals get deep joy and pleasure from playing alone or with friends,” humans also bond greatly with one another through play.

So why does this matter? Is this just another excuse to look at cute pictures of the royals, examine their clothes, and wonder about their lives? Sure, that’s fun, but I think there’s a deeper lesson here that we should look at in light of a culture that is falling apart.

Reporting on numbers from the U.S. Census Bureau, [the National Fatherhood Initiative](#) noted that 25 percent of American children grow up in homes without fathers. What if the many young adults we now see protesting and rioting grew up in similar circumstances? Did they ever have a father to regularly roughhouse with?

What about children who did grow up with a father? Growing up in recent years where safety always seems to come first, did roughhousing get pushed aside in favor of calmer academic activities?

I ask these questions because as I look at the list above, I see many of today’s young protesters struggling with the very things that roughhousing is supposed to help. Today’s protesters and rioters seem unable to manage their emotions. They seem angry, not joyful. When it comes to fairness, they seem unable to see both sides of a matter, nor does it seem as though they can argue intelligibly. Could this outbreak of wrath, anger, and civil unrest be yet another sign of the dearth of fatherhood plaguing our country?

George, Charlotte, and little Louis will likely face the difficulties of life under a spotlight. Yet if these pictures show anything, they’ll have the help of a kind and loving father, integrally involved in their life, helping them to

weather these storms.

Will American children have a chance at the same? Perhaps they still can if fathers start stepping up... if only society will let them.

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[Image Credit: Instagram-Kensington Palace]