

**Minnesota Storytime
Reading Guide**

Title: *What Dads Can't Do*

Author: Douglas Wood

Illustrator: Doug Cushman

**Publisher and
Copyright Date:** Simon & Schuster, 2000

**Connection to
Minnesota:** Minnesota author

Summary: This is a story about the strong bond between a father and child told through a series of humorous activities with father/child dinosaurs. (Note: There is a companion book *What Moms Can't Do* by the same author/illustrator team.)

Suggested ages: 4-6

Tips for Reading:

- Read the book with the energetic voice of a young child telling the story.
- As you read the book, feel free to stop and make brief comments about any activities in the story that happen with you and/or the children.
- Point out some particular illustrations (e.g. hide and seek, checkers) to emphasize the text.
- As you read and discuss the story with children, be sensitive to the children who may not have fathers who are actively involved in their lives.

**Questions
before reading:**

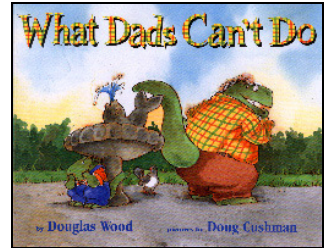
- What kinds of things do like to do with your dad (or with a male relative or special friend)?
- Do you like to do different things with your dad than your mom? What are the differences.
- When dads and kids play a game, who usually wins? Why?

**To Introduce
this story say:**

This is a story about the things a dinosaur dad and child do together, and some things that the dad can't do very well. Think about your dad (or a male relative or special friend) as we read the story.

**Questions
After Reading:**

- Do you think the dad in the book really couldn't do all those things? Why?
- What activities in the book do you like to do with your dad (or male relative or special friend)?
- What kinds of things can kids do more easily or better than dads or other grown-ups?
- What kinds of new things would you like to do with your dad (or male relative or special friend)?
- How do dads act differently than moms?



RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Art:**
- Draw a picture of a fun activity that you do with your dad (or male relative or special friend), and give it to him.
- Language:**
- Name as many ways as you can to say “dad” (e.g. father, papa, daddy).
 - Think of a special happy or fun time you’ve had with your dad (or male relative or special friend) and share it with the group.
- Math:**
- Go back through the book and count the number of times you see the cat in the story.
- Music:**
- What songs do you like to sing with your dad (or male relative or special friend)?
- Science:**
- Draw and write a “family tree” starting with your dad and listing his parents, siblings, grandparents, etc. – go as far back in the family tree as you can (and it’s OK to get help from your dad or mom or any relative).
- Writing:**
- Write a short letter/note to your dad letting him know how you feel about him.
- Other:**
- Talk to your dad (or male relative or special friend) about what life was like for him as a child, especially at the age you are right now. Did he enjoy doing things with anyone special? What did they do together?
- Suggestions for English Language Learners:**
- How do you say dad (or father) in your home language?
 - Do dads act differently in your culture?
 - What special things do dads like to do with their children in your culture?
- Related Books:**
- ***What Moms Can’t Do*** by Douglas Wood, illustrated by Doug Cushman (Simon & Schuster, 2001) – and the entire series of ***What ____ Can’t Do*** books
 - ***Lots of Dads*** by Shelley Rotner & Shelia M. Kelly (Dial Books for Young Readers, 1997)
 - ***Animal Dads*** by Sneed B. Collard III, illustrated by Steve Jenkins (Houghton Mifflin, 1997)
 - The above two books are just two of many books featuring fathers included in the **Reading with Dad Booklist** developed by the Minnesota Humanities Center. To view the list, go to <http://minnesotahumanities.org>

