

Why we all pay the price for bad fathers

Greg Hurst Social Affairs Editor

Children who do not have a secure loving relationship with their father cost the state ten times more than those that do, research has suggested.

Young people with challenging behaviour who said their fathers were supportive and responsive to their

needs cost on average £1,353 more a year in services such as extra support at school, social workers or counselling.

However, unruly children whose fathers were unreliable, unsupportive or absent had average extra costs of £13,978 a year.

Three quarters of the 174 disruptive children aged between nine and 17 in

the study by King's College, London, were boys. Children who said they had a strong relationship with their mother had additional costs of £6,743. Those with unsupportive mothers had £10,119.

The authors of the study, published in *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, said it showed the importance of fathers in upholding discipline.

