

Celebrating Dads



Compared to a few decades ago, today's men are much more involved in all aspects of raising children and doing household chores.

More and more we find stay-at-home dads who take on the role of primary caregiver while their partners go off to work. As a result of divorce and separation, many men become full or part-time custodial parents. Here are 10 tips for all those dads who would like to strengthen their role as a parent:

Be a role model. Whether you realize it or not, you are a role model. A girl who spends time with a loving father grows up knowing she deserves to be respected by boys. Fathers can teach their sons what is important in life by demonstrating honesty, humility, and responsibility.

Spend quality time with the children. How you spend your time, tells your children what is important to you. If you are too busy for them, they will feel neglected.

Be a teacher. Use everyday examples to teach your children about the basics of life. Show affection. Showing affection every day is the best way to let your children know that you love them. Children need the security that comes from knowing they are wanted.

Eat together as a family. Sharing a meal together gives the kids the chance to talk about what they are doing and want to do. It's also a good time for you to listen and give advice.

Earn the right to be heard. Begin talking with your kids when they are young so that difficult subjects will be easier to handle as they get older.

Support your partner. Whether or not you are living with your children's mother, it is important to support and respect her. When children see that their parents respect each other, they are more likely to feel that they are accepted and respected.

Start early, never stop. Your children need you from infancy onward. Even after children are grown, they will still look to you for wisdom and advice.

Be reasonable, respectful, and fair. All children need guidance and discipline, but ask yourself: "Am I being reasonable, respectful, and fair in this situation?" Remind your children of the consequences of their actions.

Say you're sorry. Being a dad is a huge responsibility and you will make mistakes along the way. Saying "I'm sorry" will help both you and your child in the long run.

"Today's dads lead demanding lives. If you are going non stop with work and family responsibilities, then maybe it's time to make a change. When was the last time you stopped to evaluate your physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual state of health? Ask yourself how you are doing in each of these areas and what you could do to make improvements. No child wants to see his or her dad overworked and drained from exhaustion!"

Here are a few self-care tips for busy dads:

Maintain your physical health. Every man needs to eat right, exercise, and get enough sleep. Failure to do so can cause big problems like stroke, heart attacks, and disease down the road. It's also important to get an annual checkup with your doctor.

Take time to recharge. Take the time periodically to engage in soothing activities like a massage or bath. Restore your creative juices and develop a hobby you enjoy. Participate in activities that bring out the kid in you. Quiet the mind chatter. Participate in activities such as meditation, Tai Chi, or Yoga that allow you to quiet your inner voice for a brief period.

Review your values, goals and strategies. Spend some time figuring out what your core values are and then determine if you are truly living according to those values. What are your goals when it comes to work, family, finances, and being in service? Do you have strategies in place to achieve them?

Think safety. When doing those chores around the house, remember to wear appropriate protective gear, and to use your knees and legs and not your back when moving heavy objects.

Remember, self care is a daily practice. No amount of rest, passion, or acts of service can substitute for it. Take care of yourself, so you can take care of those who matter most to you.