



# One-minute guide

## Supporting father's role in parenting

### What is a fathers role in parenting?

Fathers, like mothers, are pillars in the development of a child's emotional well-being. Children look to their fathers to lay down the rules and enforce them. They also look to their fathers to provide a feeling of security, both physical and emotional. Raising children can be a physical and emotional rollercoaster! And that's why mums and dads need all the support they can get to help them through the joys and challenges of being a parent.

### How can a father get involved in parenting?

**Spend time with your child.** How a father spends his time reveals to his child what is important to him. Kids grow up quickly and the time to bond is now. There are plenty of fun ways to spend family time with children.

**Discipline with love and positive parenting.** All children need positive guidance and discipline, not as punishment, but to set reasonable limits. Dads should remind children of the consequences of their actions and positively acknowledge desirable behaviour. Fathers who discipline in a calm and fair manner show love for their children.

**Be your child's role model.** Whether they realise it or not, fathers are role models to their kids. A girl who spends time with a loving father grows up knowing she deserves to be treated with respect by boys and she learns what to look for in a partner. Fathers teach boys and girls what is important in life by demonstrating honesty, humility and responsibility.

**Earn the right to be heard.** Fathers should begin conversations with their children about important topics when they are very young so that difficult subjects will be easier to handle as they get older. Take time for listening to your child's ideas and problems.

**Be your child's teacher.** To be a good father, teach your children about right and wrong and encourage them to do their best. See that your children make good choices. Involved fathers use everyday examples to help children learn the basic lessons of life.

**Eat together as a family.** An important part of healthy family life is bonding at meal-times. It gives kids the chance to talk about what they are doing and want to do. It is also a good time for fathers to listen and be involved. It provides a structure for families to be together each day.

**Read to your child.** In a modern world dominated by television and internet, it is important that fathers make the effort to read to their children in order to grow lifelong readers. Begin reading when they are very young and as they get older, encourage them to read on their own. Instilling a love of reading is one of the best ways to ensure children will have a lifetime of literacy and personal and career growth

**Respect the other parent of your child.** Parents who respect each other and demonstrate mutual respect to their children, provide a secure environment for them. When children see



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parents respecting each other, they are more likely to feel that they are also accepted and respected within the father-child relationship.

**Seek involvement early.** Show interest early by understanding a father's role during pregnancy or the adoption or surrogacy process and gently touch, play, hold and talk to your infant child. When fathers are involved, they send the clear and emphatic message: "I want to be your father. I am interested in you and we have a relationship that is important to me."

### Useful organisations for fathers and those waiting to be fathers:

#### Young Fathers Initiative (YFI)

The Young Father's initiative (YFI) aims to support and benefit young fathers – those aged 25 years and under – and expectant young fathers. It has useful downloadable leaflet on advice for men who are about to become fathers. Young Father's Initiative website: [www.young-fathers.org.uk](http://www.young-fathers.org.uk) Young Father's Initiative Telephone No: 020 237 5353

#### Dad Info

Dad info gets information to dads so that they can get the best for their children, information covers everything from pregnancy, birth and babies, to financial, legal and education information – from a dad's perspective [www.dad.info](http://www.dad.info)

#### Babycentre

With lots of general information, this site also has a good section for dads, with a handy 'Dads ask mum's forum'. [www.babycentre.co.uk/pregnancy/dad](http://www.babycentre.co.uk/pregnancy/dad)

#### Home Dad

Social website for stay at home dads. Has a forum and lots of interesting features on being a dad. [www.homedad.org.uk](http://www.homedad.org.uk)

#### Families Need Fathers

Because both parents matter [www.fnf.org.uk](http://www.fnf.org.uk) Families Need Fathers Helpline Telephone No: 0300 0300 363 Mon – Fri 9am -10pm, Sat- Sun 10am -3pm

#### Fatherhood Institute

A small charity that has been working to raise the profile of 'involved fatherhood' [www.fatherhoodinstitute.org](http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org)

#### Family Rights Group

A charity that works with parents in England and Wales whose children are in need, at risk, or in the care system and with members of the wider family who are raising children unable to remain at home [www.frg.org.uk](http://www.frg.org.uk) Confidential Advice Line 0808 801 0366

#### Fun activities for children of all ages

Some of these activities can be done at home or in a quiet outdoor space- [www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/activities)



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