

## **TIPS FOR DADS: *TEN WAYS TO BE A BETTER DAD***

**1. Respect Your Children's Mother.** One of the best things you can do for your children is to respect and support their mother, whether you are together or apart. A father and mother who respect each other and let their children know it provide a secure environment for them. When children see their parents respecting each other, they are more likely to feel that they are also accepted and respected.

**2. Spend Time with Your Children.** How a father spends his time tells his children what is important to him. If you always seem too busy for your children, they will feel neglected no matter what you say. Treasuring children often means sacrificing other things. Kids grow up so quickly. Missed opportunities are lost forever.

**3. Earn the Right to Be Heard.** Some fathers speak to their kids only when they have done something wrong. That is why so many children cringe when their mother says, "Your father wants to talk with you." Begin talking with your kids when they are young so that difficult subjects will be easier to handle later. Listen to their ideas and problems.

**4. Discipline with Love.** All children need guidance and discipline, not as punishment, but to set reasonable limits. Remind your children of the consequences of their actions and provide meaningful rewards for good behavior. Fathers who discipline in a calm and fair way show love for their children. Hitting and screaming are hurtful and scary.

**5. Be a Role Model.** Fathers are role models to their kids whether they realize it or not.

You can't turn it off. A girl who spends time with a loving father grows up knowing she deserves to be treated with respect by boys, and what to look for in a man. Dads teach sons what is important in life by demonstrating honesty, humility, and responsibility.

**6. Be a Teacher.** Too many fathers think teaching is something others do, but a father who teaches his children about right and wrong, and encourages them to do their best, will help his children make good choices. Involved fathers use everyday examples to help their children learn the basic lessons of life.

**7. Eat Together as a Family.** Sharing a meal together can be an important and healthy part of family life. It provides some structure in a busy day, and 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 give advice. Even better, it is a time for families to be together each day.

**8. Read to Your Children.** In a world where television often takes over Kids' the lives, it is important for you to make the effort to read to them. Begin reading to your children when they are very young. When they are older, encourage them to read on their own.

Nurturing the habit of reading is one of the best ways to ensure a lifetime of growth.

**9. Show Affection.** Children need the security that comes from knowing they are

wanted, accepted, and loved by their family. Fathers need to feel both comfortable and willing to hug kids. Showing affection everyday lets your kids know you love them.

**10. Realize That a Father's Job Is Never Done.** Even after kids are grown and ready to leave home, they still look to their fathers for wisdom and advice. Whether it is continued schooling, a new job, or a wedding, fathers continue to play an essential part in the lives of their children as they grow up and build their own families.

National Fatherhood Initiative. (n.d.). *10 ways to be a better dad* [On-line]. Available: <http://www.fatherhood.org/tenways.htm> .

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