



# Dad Tips:

## Staying Involved with your Kids!

### **It's about a frame of mind!**

- Establish a goal of what you want your relationship with your child to look like 20 years from now. Ask yourself if what you are doing is a step toward achieving that kind of relationship.
- Choose not to discipline through fear but through nurturing and know that you do have **influence** over your child, but not control. The only person you have control over is yourself!

### **Then there's communication...**

- Communicate often with your child, at their level and in their language. These days this might mean having to acquaint yourself with text messages or email!
- Use the 3 to 1 method. For every negative thing you speak to your child about, you should balance it out with three positive topics. The idea is to have more positive exchanges with your child so they don't dread contact with you.
- Ask your child what they are interested in and be open to what they like and dislike. It should be about them, not about you.
- Compliment, compliment, compliment! Tell your child what they do right and do it daily, but be honest!
- Let your child know you love them, even when there are problems. That means saying the words: I love you!

### **A Dad is not just about being, he's about doing...**

- Put their interest before yours. All children love to be seen as special and that's what this does.
- Don't be afraid to feed, bath, change and comfort your baby. Research shows they need and recognize the different parenting styles of men and women.
- Help your child to feel heard when they are speaking. This is more than listening and it starts when they are infants...eye contact is a great start!
- Laugh with your child. Think about this: every time you are with them you have a chance to create a positive childhood memory for them. What do you want them to remember about your time together?

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- Have fun! Get down on the floor with those younger children and follow their lead. It's as simple as making funny faces or reading a silly book together.
- Work with your child. Help them to pick up their toys as you ask them to join you in your household chores. Make it a team effort.
- Teach your child and learn with them. Get involved with their education. Having your child "teach" you what they are learning in school can be big fun as well as educational for them!
- Go to your child's activities and get involved; they'll be proud that you're there!
- Know when to hit your own "Pause Button!" Don't just react to your child's behavior. Think; then respond.
- Consistently support your child financially. The truth is that children have lots of needs and many of those needs are about money.

### **It's who you are and what you do...**

- Are you the man you want your son to be or your daughter to marry? Children often **do what they see**, not what they hear.
- It's rare that anger will ever solve a problem. If you are involved with the courts or child support systems, build relationships with those you work with. Think about this: Are you more willing to do something for people who are angry and rude, or those who are pleasant and respectful?
- Remember you are your child's role model for their adult relationships and your child's mother is a major part of your child's life. Respecting your child's mother goes a long way for your child, no matter how difficult the situation is for you.
- Develop a working relationship with your child's mother! Children do best when they are co-parented. This might mean that you have to be the "nice guy" sometimes, which is good thing for your child to observe. All great Dads teach their children respectful cooperation skills and what a wonderful way to accomplish this!

## ***Nurturing Dads - Thriving Children - Healthy Families***

Duane Michael Wilson, LMSW 4/14/2008  
Healthy Marriage & Responsible Fatherhood Initiatives  
Michigan Department of Human Services