

Fathers, you have a special place in your children's lives. Children whose fathers take an active part in their daily lives tend to be better adjusted and better equipped for success. It's not easy being a father, but don't think that you aren't as important as the mother. Your roles may not always be the same, but your interest in your children can make a significant difference. Be proud of your responsibilities and your efforts. Children don't need perfect fathers - they need caring and involved fathers.

SHOW THAT YOU CARE

- Give your children hugs and kisses often; children need physical comfort and contact from their fathers.
- Tell them how much they mean to you, "You're really important to me."
- Praise their efforts, especially if they don't succeed; teach them the importance of doing their best.

GIVE GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT

- Give your children rules and make sure your rules are clear to them; don't say 'maybe' when you mean 'no.'
- Explain your rules; it's important that children understand why they need to follow those rules.
- Be consistent with your rules; children get confused when you seem to change your mind without any reason.
- Use effective discipline to help children develop self-control; set limits and encourage children to feel good about themselves.

COMMUNICATE WITH CARE

- Look directly at your children when they talk to you.
- Gain your children's trust by listening to them when they come to you with a problem. Children will welcome your guidance, but are not likely to listen to lectures.
- Be honest with your children; admit your mistakes and teach your children the importance of taking responsibility and making amends.

BECOME YOUR CHILDREN'S EDUCATOR

- Tell your children that they can come to you with **any** questions; otherwise they may receive inappropriate answers from other people.
- Remember that you are your children's role model; they are looking to you to learn how a responsible and mature adult acts.
- Do household chores with your children; make them feel good about helping you and teach them that fathers also share household duties.
- Encourage your children to think for themselves; guide and help them with their decision making process.

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