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*Dedicated to helping children with emotional and behavioral problems,
by developing stronger more positive family relationships*

The Importance of Fathers

Are fathers important in a child's life? The answer is absolutely! Not only are fathers important, but they help stabilize the family.

A father has as much responsibility in a family as the mother. Sure there are some things that only a mother can do; such as breast feeding. But the father can be right there along side of the mother and help burp the baby or just be encouraging to the mother.

It is important to consider your role as a father. Are you an absent father or are you an involved father. Fatherhood brings with it all sorts of responsibilities, but it can also be fun. It is important for your children to know that you enjoy being a father.

Do you see your role as a provider, educator, emotional support, or do you see your role as just the disciplinarian? Your role is to be all these things, not just one. Without your emotional support and teaching, a child will be deprived.

You are a teacher just by your actions and the words you use. It is your job along with their mother to teach your children right from wrong. You are the role model. They will learn from your actions. When you are about to make a decision, try thinking, "What would I want my child to do in this situation?" If it is something you would not want your child to do, then it is probably something you should not be doing. Remember, every day you lead by example.

Spend time with your children daily if at all possible. Don't miss out on time you can spend because of competing responsibilities or interests that do not benefit the



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child. Be sure to evaluate whether your day is organized in such a way as to maximize your time with the children or away from the children. Establishing an intimacy with your children when they are young will help you deal with the teenage and young adult years. It will also help your child learn how to parent their own children and be a part of a loving, caring family.

Mutual respect between you and the mother of the child is necessary even if you are no longer married to one another. If you disrespect their mother or allow their mother to disrespect you, then the children are learning that it is okay to disrespect others.

While writing this article, I asked children to tell me what they like about best about their fathers. They did not say that he buys me things, but rather about what they do with their father. I have listed below some of the answers:

1. He makes me peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for Breakfast (we don't tell Mom.
2. He snuggles with me at night and reads me a story.
3. He prays with me
4. He helps me learn to do cannon balls in the pool and I can do them over his head.
5. He helped me learn to ride my bike.
6. He throws the ball to help me be better at batting.
7. He plays dress up and dolls with me.
8. He takes me on hikes in the woods.
9. We go on picnics in the back yard.
10. He keeps me safe.



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Take time to look at the list above. These are things that are easy to fit into your day with your child. None of these activities require you to spend money. It appears that the children are happiest when you spend quality time with them.

Remember being a father is a full time job in and of its self and does not stop even when they are 18 and want to be independent. Letting your children know that you care and that they are valued is the most important gift you can give them. ■

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