

Fathers play an important role in the lives of their children. The rewards of spending time with children are unmatched by other successes in life. Here are a few tips for building a strong relationship between father and child.

When Baby Arrives

- Discuss important issues with mom before the baby is born or soon thereafter. Make a plan for handling discipline, parenting techniques and child care. Then, stick to the plan or work together when changes are necessary.
- Practice makes perfect. Things that seem cumbersome at first (like diapering and bathing) become comfortable with practice.
- Show affection daily. Children of all ages need to feel like they are wanted, loved and respected each day.

Throughout the Years

- Schedule a regular time to read with your child. Children of all ages benefit from reading – it's never too early! As the child gets older, encourage him/her to begin sounding out words and eventually reading to you.
- Children grow quickly. Don't miss the milestones along the way. Parents often have to sacrifice other things to spend time with their children.
- Begin talking with children when they are young. This will make difficult discussions easier when they get older.
- Discipline with love. Fathers who discipline in a calm and fair manner demonstrate love for their children.
- Build skills for making good choices by teaching your child about right and wrong. Use everyday examples to teach life lessons.

For Children with Disabilities

- Learn about your child's disability and what it takes to care for him/her.
- Celebrate your child's gifts and strengths.
- Become an advocate for your child.

These tips were compiled from a variety of sources including The National Fatherhood Initiative.

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