



DADS AT A DISTANCE

Working Dads

Ideas for Strengthening Relationships Between Dads and Children

Research tells us that children with involved dads receive benefits that children without involved dads don't get.

Children with involved dads

- have better grades, positive problem solving skills, good health, ability to maintain close friendships, higher levels of empathy and compassion.
- become adults with a higher sense of satisfaction with life, more education, higher income, more stable jobs, stronger and longer marriages.

Involved dads provide physical care like feeding, bathing, clothing, and general care. They take children to activities, doctor appointments, school conferences, child care, games and practices. Involved dads play and interact in ways that show love and limits to their children. They know their children's likes, dislikes, and routines. Involved dads know the important people in their children's lives like friends, teachers, and coaches. They connect with their children on an emotional and spiritual level and reconnect with their children after an absence.

Working dads provide a stable financial base for their children and teach them career skills. When children know what to expect while Dad is away and can have contact with him, their sense of comfort and security is strengthened.

Before you go:

- **Tell your child why, when, and where the travel will occur.** Use time concepts she can understand.
- **Use virtual travel.** Show him where you are going. Get a map and trace the route. Help your child learn about where you will sleep and eat. "Check in" electronically so he can follow where you are.

- **Establish a good-bye ritual.** When it is time to go, give your child a hug and kiss. Say something like, “A Daddy’s love lasts forever. See you soon!”
- **Make a memory box** with your child before you go. Help her select items to put in it that will help when she starts to miss you.
- **Hide surprise messages or treasures** for your child to discover. Make a map or leave him a list of clues.
- **Videotape you and your child** playing a game or reading a book before you leave. She can watch it in your absence.
- **Have a picture of your child** on your phone, tablet, or computer so you see it often. Carry a photo in your wallet. Place a picture of you and your child by his bed.

While you are away:

- **Take pictures** to send or show your child. Send electronically for instant viewing.
- **Call home** every day. Start conversations with: “Tell me about your day.” “Who did you play (hang out) with today?” “What are you looking forward to this week?”
- **Skype (or phone) your child** at bedtime and read her a favorite book.
- **Send mail.** Send interesting postcards or short letters from wherever you are.
- **Buy school supplies or clothing items** from the city, state, or country you are in. When your child uses or wears these items, he will think of you.

- **Learn how to say or write “I love you”** in another language and share it with your child. If you are in an area culturally different from your own or in another country, send her something that has the native language on it.

When you return home:

- **Schedule uninterrupted time** at home. Turn off the electronics. This shows your child that he is important to you.
- **Listen to your family** before you tell them about your trip. They have much to share about things that happened while you were gone.
- **Eat a favorite family meal** or prepare a new recipe together from the travel site.
- **Have a family meeting** to talk about chores, schedules, and any issues. Plan a fun family time for the next week.
- **Talk about money** with your child and spouse/partner.
- **Play “work.”** Provide supplies. Help your child make artwork or crafts to sell you. Use real money and teach her to make change.
- **Schedule time with your spouse/partner** to reconnect as a couple and as parents.
- **Thank your spouse/partner** for caring for your child during your absence.



Although fathers may not be with their children every day, they are devoted to them. How fathers handle separation because of work situations will make an impact on their children.

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