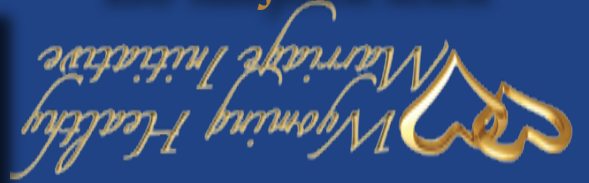


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**1-866-WYO-FAMS**  
**www.wyofams.org**



*Year of the Connected Family.*

For some great ideas for family activities call 1-866-WYO-FAMS and ask for the

and ask for a *Great Family Conversation Toolkit.*

To get you talking with your kids, call 866-WYO-FAMS

- ◆ [www.act.hhs.gov/healthymarriage](http://www.act.hhs.gov/healthymarriage)
- ◆ [www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org)

Fatherhood link.

- ◆ log onto [www.wyofams.org](http://www.wyofams.org) and click on

For Helpful Resources:

# Portrait of a *Dad*



*Anyone can be a Father...*

*Someday he  
may step into  
your shoes.  
Teach him that...  
A Dad Can*

**LOVE:** that forever kind of love that says "I'm always here for you." **Spend TIME:** There is nothing that says "I Love You" to a child like spending time together. **Be COMMITTED:** Being a dad is the biggest commitment you'll ever make, and the most worthwhile too! **Accept RESPONSIBILITY:** Your children are your greatest responsibility. You are responsible for your child's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. You CAN do it!

# It takes someone special to be a Dad

## Find the Time

Do not underestimate how much your children need you. As a father, you play a vital role in your child's development and self concept. How you spend your time communicates to your kids what you value. Make yourself available to them. Whatever their ages, be actively involved in their lives. You may have to sacrifice other things, but make the investment in your children's lives; they are worth it and children grow up so very fast.

## Be Aware of Your Kids' Lives

Learn what your kids need emotionally, physically and financially. Be a model of responsibility as you actively participate to meet those specific needs, primarily your financial obligations to your children. Take time to ask your kids questions about their friends, their favorite subject and teacher. What inspires them? What fears do they have? Who is their best friend? Ask what their dreams are. Remember that your children benefit tremendously when you take time to get to know the many parts of their lives while providing for their basic needs as well.



## Treat your children as capable

Childhood is full of many 'failed attempts'. Treat your children based on their potential. Include them in activities and give them many opportunities to learn. Allow them to do age appropriate tasks free of criticism and filled with encouraging comments. **Root them on. Be your child's biggest fan.**



## Hug your child

Children gain great confidence and security from knowing they are accepted and highly valued for who they are. Show them how valuable they are by hugging or even wrestling with them. Be willing to hug your children; it may take you out of your comfort zone at first, but you will become more comfortable with it. Good gentle and appropriate touch is a physical demonstration of affection that comforts children, affirms them as people, supports them and shows you are being sensitive to their boundaries.



## Eat together

Sharing a meal provides structure that kids can count on and also serves as a natural connecting point for conversation. Make a weekly or monthly date to take your child out to breakfast or lunch. Plan a meal together at home. Share ice cream or go to your child's school and have lunch with them in the cafeteria. Make it a point to ask about your child's day or what he or she is doing at school.

## Respect your child's mother

Showing respect and kindness toward your children's mother is one of the most powerful statements you can make to your kids. If you are married, make your wife a priority. It is your marriage, but it serves as a blueprint for your child's happiness later in life. Concentrate on showing more kindness and caring. If you are no longer with their mother, help to create an atmosphere of cooperation and kindness to the best of your ability. You may not be together as spouses or partners, but you will always be co-parents. Fathers and Mothers who respect one another provide security and emotional safety for their children.

## Say "I love You"

"I love you" spoken sincerely and backed up by your behavior demonstrates support, encouragement, tenderness, and caring as much as anything else you may do for your child. Your words – or lack of words – can either bless or discourage your children for their entire lives. Use words to build them up at every opportunity. Say "I love you" and other positive phrases every chance you get.