

Everyday Activities for Dad



Dads today are more involved in their children's development than ever before. From the changing table to the side of the bathtub to the grocery store, dads are playing an active role.

Dads can ...

Get a child dressed — Be in charge of helping a child get ready for the day. Create a unique routine, one that's different from mom's routine.

Read up — Whether the father of an infant, a toddler, or a preschooler, make an effort to learn about a child's age and stage of development. Read up on how to change a diaper, how to prepare a nursery, how to handle a tantrum, and what toys to use to help a child learn and grow. Read also about the role a dad can play.

Read to their children — Carve out a time slot for father time, be it every day or every Saturday, when a child knows he can sit down with his dad and listen to stories. Dads can take special field trips to the library or bookstores to let a child look at book selections to get a good understanding of what the child likes to read.

Make a weekend morning a dad's morning — Declare Saturday or Sunday mornings father time. Learn the morning routine well enough to get a child out of bed, dressed, and fed without the help of mom, and go somewhere fun. Or go out for breakfast, just with dad. This is time both a child and mother will look forward to.

Get comfortable in the grocery store — Make a concerted effort to learn the foods and supplies that kids need and offer to go to the store to get them. Take a list along and ask the children to help find the things throughout the store.

Help tackle sleep issues — Whether dealing with an infant who's yet to sleep through the night or a toddler who's having nightmares, take turns with mom getting out of bed when issues arise in the middle of the night. It's tiring but also a great opportunity to comfort and connect with a child.

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Spend time at home especially when caring for a newborn — The first few weeks and months of a baby's life are the most crucial for family bonding and making connections with caregivers. Accumulate vacation time before the baby is born to use after her birth, investigate the possibility of taking paternity leave and try to arrange to work from home several days a week if possible.

Get involved with the child's caregivers — Talk to the babysitter, nanny, or child care teachers. Dads who get to know the people who care for their child learn more about their child — his behavior, moods, activities, etc. — on a daily basis. From simple questions — How much did my baby eat? How long did he nap? What did he play with? — dads can keep connected.

Additional Tips for Toddlers

Dads can ...

Take a child to school — Taking a child to school, whether on foot or by car, is a great way to spend high-quality time together on a steady basis. It gives dads a chance to talk to the child and the schoolteacher as well.

Serve breakfast — Scrambled eggs, French toast, chocolate-chip pancakes ... come up with a favorite food and make it part of dad's special menu. A child can help dad prepare it.

Take a toddler to work — Nothing makes a toddler feel special as much as having his own time with his dad at work. Choose a quiet time to show your child around and make him feel important.

Born LearningSM is a public engagement campaign helping parents, caregivers and communities create early learning opportunities for young children. Designed to support you in your critical role as a child's first teacher, *Born Learning* educational materials are made available through the efforts of United Way, United Way Success By 6 and Civitas. For more information, visit us online at www.bornlearning.org.

