

# 10 WAYS TO BE A BETTER DAD



new jersey family policy council  
40 Baldwin Road, Suite 3  
Parsippany, NJ 07054

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON HOW TO STRENGTHEN YOUR FAMILY INSIDE!

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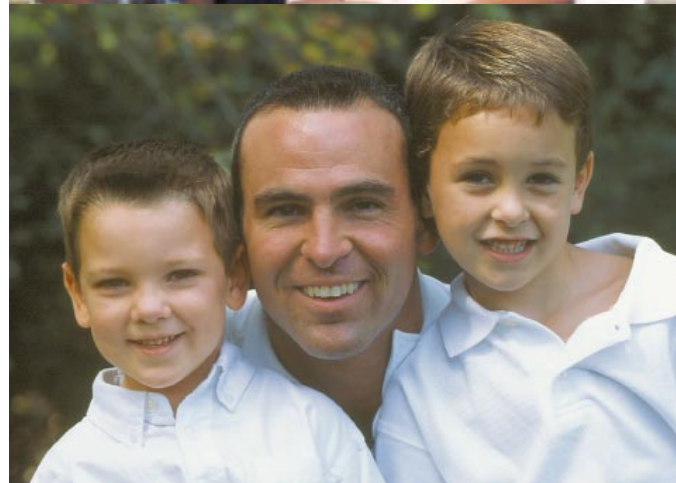
New Jersey Family Policy Council is an independent, non-profit research and education organization that was established in September 1995. Our sole mission is to strengthen the family by educating New Jerseyans on public policy issues that impact the family and by equipping them to promote traditional values that are the cornerstone of a virtuous society.

We serve the citizens of the state of New Jersey by providing them with credible, timely and accurate information on a variety of crucial matters that impact the family through publications like our *New Jersey Citizen* magazine, *New Jersey Family Issues Report* and *New Jersey Voter's Guide*. The Family Policy Council responds to issues and uses radio, television, newspapers and other forms of mass communication to reach the general public with the message of the importance and value of the family. In addition, we inform and assist policy makers, legislators, opinion leaders and the media on current events and ways they can further strengthen New Jersey's Families.



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# TEN WAYS TO BE A BETTER DAD



## 1. LOVE YOUR CHILDREN'S MOTHER

The best thing a father can do for his children is love their mother. A husband and wife who love each other – and let their kids know it – provide a secure environment for their children. “If Dad and Mom accept each other, then they must accept me, too” is the hidden, but powerful message. The best family education a child can ever get is having parents who passionately love one another.

## 2. SPEND TIME WITH YOUR CHILDREN

A father's time reflects the things he treasures most. If children feel their father is not as thoughtful or concerned about them as he is with work and his other interests, they will perceive that they are not as valuable to him, no matter what their father says. Treasuring children often means sacrificing. There is no greater love than a father giving himself sacrificially for the betterment of his children.

## 3. EARN THE RIGHT TO BE HEARD

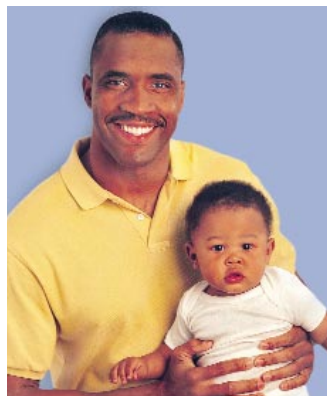
Most children cringe when they hear their mother say, “Your father wants to talk with you.” All too often, the only time a father speaks to his children is when they have done something wrong. Fathers need to build channels of communication early in a child's life so that when the time comes, dialogue about difficult subjects will be easier to handle. Talk about anything as often as possible. Show your children that you are interested in their ideas, their views and their issues. Children want to be led, but fathers must first earn the right to lead them.

## 4. DISCIPLINE WITH A GENTLE SPIRIT

One of the greatest needs kids have today is for guidance and correction. All children need discipline, not as punishment, but as a way to correct wrongdoing and develop character in them. Discipline is a function of a father's love for his children. Remember, a child who rules the house will one day ruin the house, and most likely, his or her life. Fathers, however, should be calm and judicious, not hard-nosed or harsh when they discipline.

## 5. BE A ROLE MODEL

Everyone smiles at a little boy walking in his father's footsteps, and many a father gets choked up hearing his daughter say that the man she wants to marry is “Just like you, Dad.” Fathers are role models to their children. A girl who spends time with her father when she is young will grow up knowing what she should expect from boys when she is older. It is vital that fathers also set the standards for their sons. A father can best teach his son the values of self-restraint and hard work. A father can also champion the virtues of honesty and humility by admitting when he is



wrong. And, a father can model his faith in God by regularly taking his wife and children to church. Modeling – being a living example – is worth more to your children than anything you could ever tell them.

## 6. BE A TEACHER

For far too many fathers, teaching is something somebody else does. However, the responsibility for teaching children rests primarily with parents. A father who teaches his children right from

wrong, imparts his faith in God to his kids, and encourages them to strive for excellence, will be rewarded as his children grow up to make good choices. A father should always be alert for everyday examples in which to teach his kids the lessons of life.

## 7. EAT TOGETHER AS A FAMILY

Most children today don't know the meaning of a family dinner time. Yet, the communication and unity built during this time is integral to a healthy family life. Sharing a meal together – breakfast, lunch or dinner – provides structure to an often hectic schedule. It also gives kids the opportunity to talk about their lives. This is a time for fathers to listen, as well as give advice and encouragement. But most importantly, it is a time to be together on a daily basis.

## 8. READ TO YOUR CHILDREN

In a world that is wired for sound, it is important that fathers make the effort to read to their children. Childhood is a time for learning, and learning comes first by seeing, then by hearing and reading. When a father reads to his children he promotes their creativity and helps to inspire their dreams and aspirations. Reading to your children also encourages literacy, a crucial step in the life-long process of self-improvement. A father's desire to see his children soar above the clouds unfolds the moment he opens a book and begins to read.

## 9. SHOW AFFECTION

Children long for a secure place in this fast-paced world of ours. They find it most often in the warm embrace of a parent. As children grow, so too does their need for acceptance and sense of belonging. Such a need is met when a father offers a hug or kind word, and expresses his appreciation and love for his children. But showing affection doesn't stop there. Letting your children know that you love them requires a daily effort.

## 10. REALIZE THAT A FATHER'S JOB IS NEVER DONE

While there will come a time when you'll no longer coach your child's little league team, help with homework or go to PTA meetings, your support will always play a vital role in your child's life. Older teens and young adults will look to you for wisdom and advice if you've proven trustworthy in the past. Life-molding decisions are both exciting and a little scary. A good father realizes that, while he allows his children the freedom to direct their own lives, he doesn't abandon them at the dorm room, the wedding altar or the threshold of a first job. His encouragement and discernment will leave a legacy to his children and his children's children.



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