

Keep in Touch with Dad



**FAMILIES NEED
FATHERS**

Top tips for keeping dad in the picture

Attitudes

Changing attitudes is a big task and it is sometimes difficult to put feelings aside; however it is important for children not to be caught in the middle. We get a lot of calls asking "how do I keep dad involved" and sometimes more sadly "how do I get dad involved?"

1. Does he know how important he is to the child?

Dads are more likely to be involved if they know how important they are and the unique role that they play.

2. Tell the father how important the child is to him

Being a parent is one of our most rewarding experiences and it is important that you share with him some of the things that make you proud as a mother.

3. Make Dad feel welcome

It is not easy after separation or divorce, but try to

appear welcoming at all times. The majority of the time children want to see more of the other parent - so make sure dad knows this. Also, dad might not feel welcome if there is a new partner in your life, try to let dad know that he is still wanted and needed by his children.

4. Be encouraging

Try to encourage his fathering, mention things he is good at and emphasise the positive.

5. Don't be a gatekeeper

Try not to 'watch over' parenting time, it is important that they can develop their own relationships. So being 20 minutes late is not the end of the world. If you are anxious about this, the children will pick up on it too.





Practicalities

Sometimes it is difficult to change attitudes, so start with more practical things.

1. Try to put money conflicts to one side

Of course both parents should contribute financially but parenting time is important too. Try not to make one as a condition of the other.

2. Be flexible

Routine is important for children and you too, but try to be flexible with arrangements.

3. Importance of the wider family

Involve grandparents and siblings to encourage dad to play a more active role, by confirming how important he is.

4. Invite him personally to specific activities and events

School plays, football matches and open days are a good place to start.

5. Look for things they used to do together and the child likes doing

It might seem straightforward but sometimes it is important to start with what is familiar and what both dad and child feel comfortable with. If dad sees the child/ren enjoying themselves, he is bound to enjoy it more.

6. Start simple and develop

It is important to take little steps at the beginning, so dad has time to develop and feel more comfortable in his role.

7. Share news

Try txting or e-mailing photos and video clips regularly. Get dad interested by news of how the children are doing, such as what projects they are doing at school. For example, if your child is doing a project on animals suggest he takes them on a visit to the zoo or city farm.

8. Discuss Birthdays and Christmas

It is important not to duplicate presents, talk about gifts before birthdays and Christmas.

9. Look for 'father friendly' activities

Some schools and Sure Start Centres offer 'father-friendly' activities. This is useful to help dad realise the unique role he plays and find support from other fathers.

10. Share toys and favourite books

This helps not just with consistency for the child, but also it helps dad feel more confident that the child is enjoying parenting-time.



develop



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