



10 WAYS TO BE A GREAT DAD

1. EAT TOGETHER



John Korcak was 25 years old when he became a father for the first time. He now has two sons, and while he was nervous about fatherhood he was ready for the challenge. “You feel your heart through your children. You can’t find that feeling anywhere else.” During the week, Korcak works for a construction company, but said he always looks forward to going home and making dinner with his children. “It’s an important time for me and my kids,” he said. “We talk about the day and I know they feel close to me then.”



Alvin Knowles has four children ranging in age from 5 to 24. He works as a computer associate for the Department of Education, but said the best part of his day is “coming home to see my children. Even though my day may have been stressful, my children renew my spirit.” Knowles’ hope for his children is that they will develop a strong character while having a well-rounded education that allows them to pursue their passions.

2. LISTEN

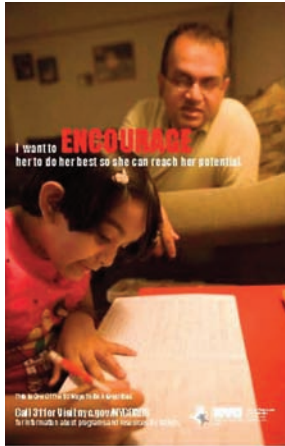


David Ondrick’s 4-year-old daughter is the light of his life. He was “thrilled” when he found out he was going to be a parent. As much as he enjoys playing with his daughter, Ondrick recognizes that sometimes tough love is needed. “Your job as a parent is to say no. You want to be their friend, of course, but you first have to act like their dad.” And a big part of being a dad is being available to listen to your children as they share their feelings, Ondrick said. “It doesn’t matter how busy you are. You have to make time to talk and listen with your kids. It makes a big difference in their lives.”



Michael Mitchell’s life changed the day he became a father. “It was the most exciting moment of my life. I knew it was never going to be the same.” With his children, now 9 and 5, and with his experience as a New York City public school teacher, Mitchell said he knows it is important for parents to listen when their children speak. “You really have to keep quiet sometimes, and just listen to every word that your child says, rather than just giving an order. It’s so important to understand what they’re saying and try and come up with a solution or compromise if there is a problem.”

3. ENCOURAGE



Abu Salahuddin's father died when he was very young. So it's important to him to spend time with his three children, ages 6 months to 6 years, even if it's just an afternoon at the playground. As he watches his children grow, Salahuddin said he has high hopes for their careers, which could include being an astronaut or an athlete. To help them reach their goals, he encourages his kids "to do well in school by helping them with homework, to read books, and by praising their achievements."



David Estimada was thrilled to become a father and believes it is his responsibility to encourage his children throughout their lives. As an immigrant who struggled to make a life for himself and his family, Estimada said he wants the best for his 6- and 8-year-old. "I tell them about my story and tell them how important it is to study and work hard. I am very involved in their studies because I know it makes a difference. I'm very proud of them."

4. RESPECT



Despite some initial anxiety, **William Navarro** was excited to become a father and "bring new life into the world." He said he believes that "anybody can be a father, but it takes a special someone to be a dad." And part of being a dad to his 3- and 11-year-olds means respecting their mother. "We are both their parents and that will never change."



Arthur Anderson didn't have a relationship with his own father so when he found out one Christmas Eve that he was going to be a dad, he knew he had to "step to the plate" and be a good father. While Anderson has been a father for only 11 months, he said he knows that being a dad is a lifetime commitment. "I want to take care of her forever. I love her and I love being her dad."

5. TALK IT OUT



Alvaro Blake didn't have a close relationship with his own father as a child, so he was unprepared the first time he was told he was going to be a dad. "I almost fainted when I found out I was going to have a son. But I knew I had to get it together for my child." Raising four children, now aged 11 to 28, has been difficult on a tight budget at times for Blake, but he loves being a dad. "Seeing myself in my children is the best part of being a dad. It's exciting for me to be a part of their lives." And over the years Blake said he has learned that it's important to talk out tough times with your children. "In the long run they will know that you love and respect them because you took the time to talk it out and listen to their feelings."

6. SPEND TIME TOGETHER

Gustavo Ramirez found out he was going to be a father when he was only 18 years old. While he was terrified at first, with the support of his family, he is working hard to be a good dad to his 1-year-old twin boys. Ramirez goes to school during the day and works at night, but he makes sure he spends time with his children. "I try the best I can to be with my kids. I love seeing them learn and grow up so fast. And I'll miss it if I'm not around."



7. READ



Alvin Knowles has four children ranging in age from 5 to 24. He works as a computer associate for the Department of Education, but said the best part of his day is "coming home to see my children. Even though my day may have been stressful, my children renew my spirit." Knowles' hope for his children is that they will develop a strong character while having a well-rounded education that allows them to pursue their passions. Knowles helps his kids reach that goal by reading with them every chance he gets. "Reading with your children is so important. It opens up another world. It allows them to have an imagination and shows them that anything is possible."

8. BE A ROLE MODEL



At first, **Jose Munoz** was nervous about being a father and knew it would be the biggest challenge of his life, but the most rewarding one also. Munoz is very proud of his three children, ages 6 to 16, and enjoys seeing them do well in school. He knows that their continued success is dependent upon him being a good role model. “I work really hard to set a good example for my kids. I want them to know that their actions matter.”

9. A FATHER’S JOB IS NEVER DONE



Arthur Anderson didn’t have a relationship with his own father so when he found out one Christmas Eve that he was going to be a dad, he knew he had to “step to the plate” and be a good father. While Anderson has been a father for only 11 months, he said he knows that being a dad is a life-time commitment. “I want to take care of her forever. I love her and I love being her dad.”

No matter how old **Christopher Loverso’s** children get, he knows a father’s job is never done. “You have to be involved in your kid’s life as long as you live. It doesn’t matter if they’re an infant or adult, you’re always going to be their dad.” With three children between the ages of 1 and 10, Loverso said, “The best part about being a dad is that when things are tough or crazy in your day, your child can say something that just puts a smile on your face.”



10. HUG AND KISS



Santiago Jimenez would love to give his kids everything they ask for, but sometimes it just isn't possible. He has four children between 5- and 19-years-old and said that "fatherhood is the biggest gift God can give a man." Jimenez knows, however, what his kids really need is love and affection. "I kiss and hug my kids so they know they have protection and love. They know they can count on me."

Augustine Edobor-Osula is a single father raising his 9-year-old son. Even though the day-to-day responsibilities of being a dad can become overwhelming, Edobor-Osula loves being a father. "I'm doing it alone — the laundry, feeding him, helping him with his homework. But it's worth it because he's a part of me." Even in the busiest moments of the day, Edobor-Osula makes time to hug and kiss his son because "it's important to show your kids love. I love him so much. So it comes naturally to show him affection."

