

# Marriage & Family

## Tips for Dads

1. Spend time with your child.
  - a. Our priorities are revealed by the amount of time we invest in them, and our children know this.
  - b. Do not deceive yourself by rationalizing that a little “quality time” is sufficient to establish and maintain a relationship with your child.
2. Allow your child to be his or her own person.
  - a. A common complaint counselors hear from teenagers is that they feel their parents are always trying to make them into “mini-me’s.”
  - b. Your children need to feel that you love and accept them for who they are.
3. Learn to listen to your children.
  - a. Avoid using every conversation as an opportunity to lecture or teach an object lesson to them. Men are notorious for feeling like they need to give advice or “fix” things.
  - b. Try and practice more listening—ears open, nonjudgmental, non-advice-giving listening—and you will probably find your children talking with you more often.
4. Join your kids in things they are interested in. Find an activity the child enjoys and do it together.
5. Be consistent and tireless in your effort to maintain your relationship with your children.
  - a. As your child grows older, it is normal for him or her to pull away from you.
  - b. Do not be discouraged or dismayed by this—it is part of growing up. But, let your child know how important your relationship with him or her is, and keep the door open.

Mark E. Crawford, Ph. D., “Dad: Use Your Relationship to Gain Influence with Your Children,” American Association of Christian Counselors.