

THE 'PAPPA EFFECT'

How dads 'are' with their children has a massive influence on how they will value and respect themselves down the line. I call this the 'Pappa Effect'. I've used the term **Pappa** as an acronym below for some effective fathering characteristics:

P.....Present: This means emotional and physical presence and being really 'in the moment' when you are with your kids. Actually, many dads do this better than mums because dads are not quite so good at multitasking. The upside is that when they are with their kids they are often more focused. If you don't live with your children you need to maximise the time you do have with them and find telephonic or virtual ways to continue the connection.

A.....Available: Don't be so busy that your kids think you don't care. I always remember the heart-wrenching *Chicken Soup for the Soul* story of the boy who found out how much his dad's time was worth per hour at work and saved up enough to buy an hour of his dad's time.

P.....Proud: Teach kids to value themselves by valuing and believing in them. Show pride in both their achievements and their journey in getting there, even if it is a place in the D team! And please, please don't live vicariously through your children. It is an unfair burden to expect them to perform so that you feel good about yourself. If your attention and affection is performance-based you are not loving them for who they are but for what they do. Your children are not you and may never become a clone of you. Love them for who they are, not what you expect them to be or do and this is what will grow their confidence and self-belief.

P.....Protective: Dads are a symbol of physical and emotional security and they are often less easy to manipulate than mums when it comes to implementing boundaries. While you may be the family 'fixer' on many levels because you get things sorted, your role is also to teach your children to become resourceful and resilient in themselves, to learn independence little by little. These are the tools they will use to create their own happiness and success one day.

A.....Attentive: Pay attention. Listen. Talk and share. Do things together - dates with your daughters and adventures with your sons. Dads have a huge influence on how their daughters will allow themselves to be treated by men; how their sons will treat women, and on the healthy expression of emotions. Always, and in every moment, strive to be a celebration and example of positive human connection and respect, and believe in your child.

Dads, here's wishing you a very happy Father's Day. May you be celebrated, honoured and adored for your positive 'Pappa Effect'.

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