

# Everyday Activities for Dad



So often, families divide child care responsibilities along gender lines. The following hints are designed to help dads conquer their fears of the unknown and go where they've rarely gone before – to the changing table, over the side of the bathtub, into the grocery store...

## Dads can ...

**Get a child dressed** – be in charge of helping their child get ready for the day. Create their own unique routine, one that's different from mom's routine.

**Read up** – whether the father of an infant, a toddler or a teen, make an effort to learn about a child's age and stage of development. Read up on how to change a diaper, how to prepare a nursery, how to handle a tantrum or what toys to use to help a child learn and grow. Read also about the role a dad can play.

**Read to their children** – carve out a time slot for father time, be it everyday or every Saturday, when a child knows he can sit down with his dad and listen to stories. Dads can take special field trips to the library or bookstores to let a child look at book selections so they can get a good understanding of what a child likes to read.

**Make a weekend morning a dad's morning** – declare Saturday or Sunday mornings father time. Learn the morning routine ropes well enough to get a child out of bed, dressed and fed without the help of mom and go somewhere fun. Or go out for breakfast, just with dad. This is time both a child and mother will look forward to.

Adapted from the book *Understanding Children*.  
For more information and for additional downloadable tools, visit us online at [civitas.org](http://civitas.org).

## Everyday Activities for Dad, page 2

**Get comfortable in the grocery store** – make a concerted effort to learn the foods and supplies that mom buys every week for the kids and offer to go to the store to get them. Take a list along, and ask the child to help find the things throughout the store.

**Help tackle sleep issues** – whether dealing with an infant who's yet to sleep through the night or a toddler who's having nightmares, take turns with mom getting out of bed when issues arise in the middle of the night. It's tiring, but a great opportunity to comfort and connect with a child, as well as give mom a rest.

**Spend time at home** – especially when caring for a newborn. The first few weeks and months of a baby's life are the most crucial when it comes to making healthy connections to caregivers and to bonding as a family. Accumulate vacation time before the baby is born to use after her birth, investigate the possibility of taking paternity leave and try to arrange to work from home several days a week if possible.

**Get involved with the child's caregivers** – talk to the babysitter, nanny or day care teachers. Dads that get to know the people who care for their child, often learn more about their child – his behavior, moods, activities, etc. – on a daily basis. From simple questions – How much did my baby eat? How long did he nap? What did he play with? – dads can keep connected.

### Additional Tips for Toddlers

#### Dads can...

- **Take their child to school** – taking a child to school, whether on foot or by car, is a great way to spend quality time together on a steady basis. It gives dads a chance to talk to their child and their school teacher as well.
- **Serve breakfast** – scrambled eggs, French toast, chocolate chip pancakes... come up with a favorite food and make it part of dad's special menu. A child can help dad prepare it.
- **Take a toddler to work** – nothing makes a toddler feel special like having his own special time with his dad at work. Use a quiet Friday afternoon to show a child around, give him a highlighter and some paper and have him "help" out.