

# Fatherhood Today: Emotional Presence, Developmental Impact, Challenges and Simple Ways to Be a Better Father

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## Introduction

In today’s fast-changing world, the role of a father is no longer limited to being just a provider or disciplinarian. Fatherhood has transformed into a dynamic, emotionally rich, and deeply involved experience. Fathers today are not simply observers in their children’s growth—they are active participants who shape a child’s emotional, cognitive, and social development from the earliest stages of life. Studies in developmental psychology and family science consistently highlight that children with engaged fathers show better self-confidence, stronger communication skills, and a higher sense of security. This involvement begins even before birth. Many fathers attend prenatal check-ups, support the mother’s emotional well-being, and prepare themselves for active parenting. As children grow, an involved father’s presence becomes a protective factor against emotional distress, behavioral issues, and academic struggles. In simple terms, a good father is not defined by perfection but by presence, warmth, guidance, and consistency. Modern fatherhood emphasizes nurturing, emotional openness, and shared responsibility—qualities that contribute to healthier families and stronger societies.

## The Changing Face of Fatherhood

The image of the traditional father—strict, emotionally distant, and focused mainly on earning has significantly shifted. Today’s fathers are embracing a more holistic role that balances emotional connection and practical care giving.

### 1. Fathers as Co-Parents, Not Helpers

Modern dads do not “help” with parenting; they share it. They are equally involved in decision-making, from choosing schools to planning routines and managing behavior. This teamwork strengthens the family bond and removes outdated gender roles.

### 2. Participation in Everyday Care

Fathers today commonly engage in tasks once seen as “mother’s duties”. Feeding and bathing young children, preparing meals, attending parent–teacher meetings, putting children to bed, Managing household chores. This active participation teaches children that caregiving is a responsibility shared by both parents and not defined by gender.

**3. Emotional Presence and Openness:** Unlike traditional norms that expected fathers to be reserved, today’s fathers’ express affection, communicate openly, and validate their



children’s feelings. This emotional engagement helps children develop empathy, resilience, and emotional intelligence.

### 4. Involvement From Early Childhood to Adolescence

Modern fathers play a hands-on role across all stages of childhood:

**Infancy:** soothing, bonding, skin-to-skin contact, stimulating play

**Middle childhood:** helping with academics, moral guidance, hobbies

**Adolescence:** mentoring, discussing life challenges, building trust

This consistent involvement strengthens the parent-child relationship and creates a stable support system.

### 5. Impact of Social Change

As more women join the workforce and families adopt more balanced lifestyles, fathers naturally take on greater responsibilities at home. Society, too, increasingly recognizes the importance of an emotionally present father.

### 6. Role Modeling Positive Masculinity

Good fathers show children especially sons that masculinity can include kindness, responsibility, respect, and emotional strength. This challenges stereotypes and promotes healthier attitudes in the next generation.

### The Importance of a Good Father

A father’s influence reaches far beyond providing income or setting rules. A good father shapes a child’s personality, confidence, emotional well-being, and future relationships. Research consistently shows that when fathers are warm, involved, and supportive, children grow into healthier, happier, and more successful adults.

## Why Good Fathers Matter:

### Emotional Security and Stability

Emotional security forms the foundation of a child's overall development, and a father's presence plays a crucial role in building this sense of stability. When a father offers warmth, comfort, and reassurance, children feel safe to express their feelings and share their worries. A father who listens without judgment helps children understand that their emotions are valid and that they will be supported even in difficult moments. This consistent emotional availability reduces fear, anxiety, and insecurities, allowing the child to feel grounded and protected. Over time, such children become more resilient, better able to cope with life's challenges, and more confident in their ability to handle stressful situations. A secure emotional bond with a father teaches children that they are valued, loved, and never alone—creating a strong inner foundation that influences every part of their lives.

### Healthy Behaviour and Social Development

A father's influence on behaviour and social development is often seen through everyday actions rather than lectures or strict rules. Children carefully observe how their father treats others, manages conflicts, and handles responsibilities. When a father consistently behaves with kindness, respect, and patience, these qualities naturally become part of the child's character. Through this modelling, children learn empathy, cooperation, honesty, and responsible behaviour. A father who encourages open discussion and guides gently rather than controlling harshly helps children understand moral values and the importance of respecting others. This positive social learning makes children more adaptable, friendly, and capable of forming healthy relationships. They become better at sharing, negotiating, and understanding others' perspectives—skills that are essential for success in school and society. In the long run, such children often develop leadership qualities because they grow up in an environment that supports emotional awareness and responsible decision-making.

### Better Academic Performance

Father involvement has a strong impact on children's academic success. When fathers show interest in learning—by asking about school, helping with homework, reading together, or encouraging curiosity—children become more motivated and confident in their abilities. A father's encouragement helps develop better concentration, a stronger attention span, and improved problem-solving skills. Children feel more capable and willing to explore new ideas because they know they have support at home. Research consistently shows that children with engaged fathers perform better in subjects like maths, language, and science, and tend to participate more actively in school activities. A father's involvement also builds discipline and a positive attitude toward learning, which are essential for long-term academic success. Even small acts—like praising effort, celebrating

achievements, or simply being present—create a learning environment where children feel inspired to do their best.

### Strong Self-Esteem and Identity Formation

A father plays an essential role in shaping how children view themselves and understand their place in the world. Through his words, actions, and emotional presence, a father becomes one of the first mirrors through which a child sees their own worth. Sons often look to their fathers as role models, learning how to manage emotions, take responsibility, and build healthy relationships by observing how their father behaves in daily life. Daughters, on the other hand, learn early ideas about self-respect, personal boundaries, and how they deserve to be treated by watching how their father interacts with them and with others. A supportive and loving father sends a powerful message: "You matter. You are capable. You are worthy." This encouragement forms the basis of strong self-esteem. Children raised by such fathers grow up more confident in their abilities, more secure in their identity, and better equipped to make thoughtful decisions. A good father guides without controlling, supports without pressuring, and sets boundaries that teach children to respect both themselves and others. Over time, this nurturing environment helps shape an emotionally strong, self-aware, and responsible individual.

### Emotional Intelligence and Communication Skills

Fathers contribute significantly to a child's emotional intelligence—the ability to understand, express, and manage emotions in a healthy way. When fathers show affection, apologise when they make mistakes, and communicate openly about their feelings, children learn that emotions are natural and can be expressed safely. This modelling teaches children how to identify their emotions, talk about them clearly, and respond to others with empathy. As a result, they become better at resolving conflicts, handling stress, and building supportive relationships. Emotional intelligence also helps children succeed in school and social environments because they are able to communicate effectively, understand different viewpoints, and adapt to challenges with maturity. A father who listens, explains, and encourages respectful dialogue creates a home where communication is an everyday practice. This foundation helps children grow into emotionally balanced, compassionate, and confident individuals who can navigate friendships, future partnerships, and life's complexities with greater understanding.

### Challenges Fathers Face Today

Today's fathers are expected to play many roles at the same time—provider, caregiver, role model, emotional supporter, and sometimes even friend. This can create a lot of silent pressure. Many fathers work long hours to support their families financially, and at the same time, they are expected to be emotionally present and actively involved in their children's daily lives. Balancing office stress, job insecurity, loans, and household responsibilities can often leave them mentally and physically exhausted. Society also sends mixed messages: on

one side, fathers are told to be “strong” and “tough,” and on the other side, they are encouraged to be sensitive, expressive, and gentle. This confusion can make it difficult for fathers to know how to behave, especially if they grew up with strict or emotionally distant parenting.

Some fathers may also struggle with guilt—feeling that they are not doing enough for their children, especially if they miss school events, family time, or important moments due to work. Others may feel emotionally unsupported themselves, as men are often discouraged from sharing their own fears, sadness, or stress. In some families, cultural or traditional expectations still place the entire burden of financial responsibility on the father, which increases pressure. Recognizing these challenges is very important. When families, workplaces, and society understand what fathers are going through, it becomes easier to offer them emotional support, appreciation, and practical help. A supported father is more likely to be a present, relaxed, and emotionally available parent.

**Simple Ways to Become a Good Father**

Becoming a good father does not mean being perfect; it means being present, willing to learn, and consistently trying your best. Even small, everyday actions can make a huge difference in a child’s life.

Spending quality time is one of the most meaningful ways to connect. It doesn’t always have to be long outings or big plans—even 15 minutes of full attention without mobile phones or distractions can make a child feel important and loved. Playing a game, talking about their day, reading a book, or simply sitting and listening can build a deep bond.

Communicating openly and listening without judgment helps children feel safe sharing their thoughts and feelings. When a father listens carefully instead of immediately criticizing or giving orders, the child learns that their voice matters. This builds trust. Children are then more likely to come to their father in times of confusion, fear, or difficulty.

Sharing responsibilities at home—such as cooking, cleaning, helping with homework, or caring for younger siblings—not only supports the mother or other family members but also sets a powerful example. Children learn that family life is a shared effort, and that caregiving is not limited to mothers alone. This teaches respect for equality and teamwork.

Encouraging and appreciating the child’s efforts is another simple but powerful practice. When fathers praise not just success, but effort—like trying hard in studies, sports, or hobbies—children feel motivated to keep improving. They learn that mistakes are part of learning, not something to be ashamed of.

Modelling respect, kindness, and emotional honesty is crucial. Children imitate what they see. When a father speaks politely, controls anger, apologises when wrong, and shows empathy towards others, the child naturally absorbs these qualities. This becomes the foundation for their own behaviour and relationships.

Finally, being consistent and dependable gives children a strong sense of security. When a father keeps his promises, shows up when he says he will, and responds in a calm, stable way, children know they can rely on him. This reliability helps them feel safe, confident, and emotionally strong.

**Conclusion**

Fatherhood today is far more than fulfilling traditional expectations—it is a journey of emotional connection, shared responsibility, and continuous learning. A good father shapes a child’s confidence, values, behaviour, and sense of identity in powerful and lasting ways. As society evolves, so does the role of fathers, who now embrace nurturing, caregiving, communication, and emotional openness alongside providing financial support. Their involvement strengthens families, encourages healthy child development, and builds stronger communities. At the same time, it is important to recognize that fathers also face real pressures—balancing work, emotional expectations, and personal struggles. When families and society support fathers, they are better able to be present, loving, and dependable for their children.

In the end, the essence of good fatherhood lies not in perfection but in presence. Children thrive when they feel loved, understood, and guided by a father who shows consistency, empathy, and respect. A father’s influence lasts a lifetime, shaping not only the children he raises but also future generations. Fatherhood is, truly, one of the most meaningful and transformative roles a person can hold.

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