



1. **Listen To Girls.** I focus on what is really important—what my daughter or stepdaughter thinks, believes, feels, dreams and does—rather than how she looks. I have a profound influence on how my daughter views herself. When I value my daughter and take her seriously, I give her confidence to use her talents in the world.
2. **Encourage My Daughter's Strength & Celebrate Her Savvy.** I help her learn to recognize, resist and overcome barriers. I help her develop her strengths to achieve her goals, help other people, and help herself. I help her be what Girls Incorporated calls *Strong, Smart and Bold!*
3. **Respect Her Uniqueness; Urge Her To Love Her Body & Who She Is.** I tell and show my daughter or stepdaughter that I love her for who she is and see her as a whole person, capable of anything. Remember 1) growing girls need to eat often and healthy; 2) fad dieting doesn't work; 3) she has her body for what it can do, not how it looks. Advertisers spend billions to convince her she doesn't look "right." I won't buy into it.
4. **Be Physically Active With Her.** Start young to play catch, tag, jump rope, basketball, Frisbee, hockey, soccer, or just take walks...you name it! Physically active girls are less likely to get pregnant, drop out, or put up with abuse. The most physically active girls have dads who are active with them!
5. **Get Involved In Her School.** I volunteer, chaperone, read to her class. I ask questions: Does her school do media literacy and body image awareness? Does it tolerate sexual harassment of boys or girls? Do more boys take advanced math and science? Are at least half of student leaders girls?
6. **Get Involved In Her Activities.** I volunteer to drive, coach, direct a play, teach a class—anything! I demand equality. He succeeded. Dads make a difference!
7. **Help Make The World Safe & Fair For Girls.** Over-protection doesn't keep away all dangers, and it tells my daughter that I don't trust her! Instead, I work with others (especially other dads) to demand an end to violence against females, media sexualization of girls, Neanderthal stereotypes of boys, pornography, marketers profiting from our daughters' insecurities, and all gender inequity.
8. **Take Her To Work With Me.** I participate in Take Our Daughters & Sons to Work Day and make sure my business participates. I show her how I manage money. My daughter will have a job and bills some day, so I introduce her to the world of work and finances!
9. **Support Positive Alternative Media For Girls.** Our family watches programs that portray smart savvy girls. We get healthy girl-edited magazines and websites like [New Moon Girls](#). I don't just condemn what's bad; I also support media that support my daughter!
10. **Learn From Other Fathers.** Together, we fathers and stepfathers are walking encyclopedias of experience, expertise and encouragement. I share what I know and listen to the wisdom of other dads. I use and share tools like [thedadman.com](#). I'm proud of being a Dad!



## Dads & Daughters® Dad-Q Self-Assessment Quiz

*Adapted from Dads & Daughters®: How to Inspire, Understand and Support Your Daughter. by Joe Kelly*

	<i>Answer honestly and don't worry about your score.</i>	Often	Some-times	Hardly Ever
1	I can name her 3 best friends	1	2	3
2	I know my daughter's goals	1	2	3
3	I comment on my wife/partner's weight	3	2	1
4	I'm physically active with my daughter (shoot hoops, jog, bike, etc.)	1	2	3
5	I make dinner for my family	1	2	3
6	I talk to my daughter about managing money	1	2	3
7	I spend 1/2 hour, 1-on-1 with her, doing something we both enjoy	1	2	3
8	I talk to other fathers about raising kids	1	2	3
9	I talk to other fathers about raising daughters	1	2	3
10	I restrict her activities more than I do/would for a son	3	2	1
11	I talk to my daughter about advertising and marketing to kids	1	2	3
12	I tell my daughter what her strengths are	1	2	3
13	I comment on my daughter's weight	3	2	1
14	I know what school project she's working on	1	2	3
15	I protest negative media portrayals of girls	1	2	3
16	I view pornographic material	3	2	1
17	I participate in parenting organizations	1	2	3
18	I yell at my daughter's mother	3	2	1
19	I suggest that my daughter go on a diet	3	2	1
20	I object when others suggest that she go on a diet	1	2	3
21	I converse with my daughter, and she does most of the talking	1	2	3
22	I know what my daughter is concerned about today	1	2	3
23	I know how many student government officers at her school are girls	1	2	3
24	I have read her school's sexual harassment policy	1	2	3
25	I help boys learn to respect girls and vice versa	1	2	3
26	I tell my daughter stories about my own youth	1	2	3
27	I am honest with her	1	2	3
	<b><i>For dads who live away from their daughters</i></b>			
28	I initiate contact with her at least 5 times a week	1	2	3
29	I ask how she feels transferring to and from my home	1	2	3
30	I demonstrate respect for her mother and stepparent(s)	1	2	3
31	I fulfill my visitation and support commitments	1	2	3
	<b><i>For dads living with daughters--extra credit for live-away dads</i></b>			
32	I visit my daughter's school during the school day	1	2	3
33	I volunteer to help with her extracurricular activities	1	2	3
34	I take my daughter to school	1	2	3
35	I volunteer at and/or for my daughter's school	1	2	3
36	I take my daughter to work with me	1	2	3
	<b>Total Points</b>			

### **If you scored:**

36-45: Your relationship with your daughter looks like it's on very solid ground.

46-65: You appear to have a good foundation, and there are opportunities to improve.

66-80: You may need active steps to re-examine your attitudes and build deeper respect for each other.

81 +: Consider serious change. Your actions and attitudes may be undermining your daughter.

No matter where you are today in your relationship with her, you can make things even better. Get tips at

[www.dadsanddaughters.org](http://www.dadsanddaughters.org). Adapted from *Dads & Daughters®: How to Inspire, Understand and Support Your Daughter.*

## 12 Tips for Live-Away Dads

Through divorce, deployment or frequent travel, some dads live away from their kids for long periods—AND have a vibrant, loving, lasting relationship. (Pronouns alternate between daughter & son).

**HANG IN THERE FOR THE LONG HAUL.** Living away while raising a child is tough, but both his mom and I remain tremendous influences in his life. I meet my responsibilities, including child support, without resentment. I stay calm, committed, loving and loyal toward him—and do what I can to help his mom do the same. If abuse or abandonment happen, my child needs me to protect him, but he also needs to make peace in his life with that relationship.

**ENCOURAGE HER BOND WITH MOM.** My child's relationship with her mom is different than her relationship with me. My child needs to participate fully in it, even when that's hard for me (or her). I encourage her communication with her mom, recognizing that I'm not responsible for their relationship.

**DEVELOP HEALTHY SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS FOR MYSELF.** It's normal to struggle with anger, loneliness and other difficult emotions. I meet my adult emotional and social needs maturely with healthy adults and don't work them out through my child.

**REMEMBER THAT MY CHILD LIVES IN TWO HOMES.** The hours before he leaves my home and after he returns are times of adjustment and sadness that he has to leave either parent —behind. I respect that he may or may not want to talk right away about his time with his mom; I let him take the lead. I don't pry for information or play down his feelings.

**FATHER THE BEST I CAN WHEN MY CHILD IS WITH ME.** I can't change how her other parents raise her or make up for what they do or don't do, so I focus on what I can control: my own actions. I'm not judgmental about their parenting because no one (including me) is a perfect parent. I trust that all of us are trying our best. I parent her calmly; have clear expectations; show affection, patience, love and trust--without demanding perfection. I give her healthy attention when she's with me *and* when she's away (by phone, text, mail, etc.).

**DON'T TRASH MOM.** In word and gesture, I speak well about my child's mom even when I'm angry at her—and even if she speaks poorly about me. If I have trouble speaking well, I wisely say little. Negative talk about my child's mom humiliates and wounds my child, causing him to think less of himself, his mom and *me*. I keep him out of the middle, even if others don't, and I'll resolve adult conflicts away from him so he can be the child.

**CO-PARENT WITH MOM.** If possible, I communicate openly with her mom. As our child grows up, other parents' perspective is valuable. We work with each other (and our partners) for our child's well-being. When I share my concerns and joys about our child with her mom (and vice versa), she gets our best and most informed parenting.

**MY CHILD AND HIS MOTHER ARE DIFFERENT PEOPLE.** I don't misdirect anger at my ex toward my child. When my child doesn't listen, does less than his best or makes mistakes (normal kid behaviors), I don't confuse his mistakes with his mom's actions. Instead, I remember that mistakes are great teachers, and do what I can do to make things better.

**LISTEN TO MY CHILD.** Lecturing and arguing get me nowhere. I can't help my child if I minimize her feelings or tell her everything will be okay when I can't guarantee that it will. Instead, I listen and am there for her. I accept my child for who she is; not who I want her to be, think she should be, or think she would be if she were raised only by me. I take the lead in communicating -- even when I feel unappreciated--building the emotional connection that will help her listen to me when it really counts.

**FOCUS ON MY CHILD'S POSITIVES.** I don't father by always pointing out what my child did wrong, so he can fix it. That may work on the job, but not with my children. Focusing on negatives undermines his strength and confidence—already stretched by living in two homes.

**MANAGE EXPECTATIONS WISELY.** My child has different rules and expectations in her mother's house. I am patient with her responses to those differences, while remaining clear about my expectations for our home. I try not to compensate for our family situation by giving in to demands that I spoil my child or lessen my expectations just because she is a child of divorce. I remember that an honest, solid and lifelong relationship with her is more important than what happens today.

**BE THE FATHER, NOT THE MOTHER.** I am a powerful and encouraging role model, and I tell him he has a special place in my heart. My masculine actions and loving words help him realize that he too can be adventurous, affectionate, playful and successful – and should expect respect from honorable men. My belief in him will help him blossom into a young adult who can make me and her mother proud.

Whether through divorce, deployment or frequent travel, some dads live away from their children. Kids still need a vibrant, loving lasting relationship with Dad, and Mom can help.

**HANG IN THERE FOR THE LONG HAUL.** Raising a child from two different homes is tough for her and for all of her parents and/or stepparents. Both his dad and I remain tremendous influences in his life. I stay calm, committed, loving and loyal toward him—and do what I can to help his dad do the same. If abuse or abandonment happen, my child needs me to protect him, but he also needs to make peace in his life with that relationship.

**ENCOURAGE HER BOND WITH MOM.** My child's relationship with her dad is different than her relationship with me. My child needs to participate fully in it, even when that's hard for me (or her). I encourage her communication with Dad, recognizing that I'm not responsible for their relationship.

**REMEMBER THAT MY CHILD LIVES IN TWO HOMES.** The hours before he leaves my home and after he returns are times of adjustment and sadness that he has to leave either parent —behind. I respect that he may or may not want to talk right away about his time with his dad; I let him take the lead. I don't pry for information or play down his feelings.

**SUPPORT HER TIME WITH HER FATHER.** I recognize that uninterrupted father-child time is critical to his relationship with her and to *my* relationship with her. She can enjoy Dad time without my checking in. I help her feel comfortable contacting me while with her dad, should she need something from me. And, I trust that her father keeps her safe during their time together—he loves her as much as I do.

**CO-PARENT WITH DAD.** If possible, I communicate openly with his dad. As our child grows up, other parents' perspective is valuable. We work with each other (and our partners) for our child's well-being. When I share my concerns and joys about our child with his dad (and vice versa), he gets our best and most informed parenting.

**DEVELOP HEALTHY SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS FOR MYSELF.** It's normal to struggle with anger, loneliness and other difficult emotions. I meet my adult emotional and social needs maturely with healthy adults and don't work them out through my child.

**DON'T TRASH DAD.** In word and gesture, I speak well about my child's dad even when I'm angry at him - - and even if he speaks poorly about me. If I have trouble speaking well, I wisely say little. Negative talk about my child's mom humiliates and wounds my child, causing her to think less of herself, her dad and *me*. No matter the circumstances of our divorce, I respect that her father's new family is now part of my child's family I keep her out of the middle, even if others don't, and I'll resolve adult conflicts away from her so she can be the child.

**MY CHILD AND HIS DAD ARE DIFFERENT PEOPLE.** I won't misdirect anger at my child's father toward my child. When my child doesn't listen to me, does less than his best in school or makes other mistakes (normal behaviors for most kids), I won't confuse his mistakes with his dad's actions. Instead, I'll remember that mistakes are great teachers, and do what I can do to make things better.

**MOTHER MY BEST WHEN SHE IS WITH ME.** I can't change how her other parents raise her or make up for what they do or don't do, so I focus on what I can control: my own actions. I'm not judgmental about their parenting because no one (including me) can be a perfect parent. I trust that her father and I are each trying our best. I parent her calmly, give her choices, have clear expectations, and show affection. I encourage her to communicate with and trust both of her parents, even (maybe especially) when she makes mistakes.

**MANAGE EXPECTATIONS WISELY.** My child has different rules and expectations in his father's house. I am patient with his responses to those differences, while remaining clear about my expectations for our home. I try not to compensate for our family situation by giving in to demands that I spoil my child or lessen my expectations just because he is a child of divorce. I remember that an honest, solid and lifelong relationship with him is more important than what happens today.

**BE THE MOTHER, NOT THE FATHER.** I am a powerful and encouraging role model, and I tell my child she has a special place in my heart. My actions and loving words help her realize that she too can be adventurous, affectionate, playful and successful – and should expect respect from honorable men. My belief in her will help her blossom into a young adult who can make me and her father proud.

Find more resources at [www.thedadman.com](http://www.thedadman.com), [www.daughters.com](http://www.daughters.com) and [www.bonusfamilies.com](http://www.bonusfamilies.com)



## How Dads Help Daughters with Body Image

Dads & stepdads make a huge difference in daughters' lives. These dad tips can improve girls' body image. (adapted from [Father Hunger: Fathers, Daughters, and the Pursuit of Thinness](#) by Margo D. Maine PhD)

1. Learn about your daughter's life. Don't assume that your experience and hers are similar.
2. Respect her emotions and opinions. Let her disagree with you without withdrawing your affection.
3. Take the [How Well Am I Doing as My Daughter's Father](#) quiz to assess the gaps in your knowledge about your daughter's life. Commit to improving your score.
4. Help her develop values other than consumerism. Enjoy nature, reading, the arts, sports, music, cultivating friendships, volunteerism, or other activities.
5. Show respect for real women of substance. Monitor your attitudes toward women's appearance and achievements. Point out the contributions women make in your community or family.
6. Watch what you say about women's bodies. Criticizing women's weight and appearance is "normal" in our culture—realize the power of what you say to your daughter.
7. Become more media-literate. Watch what she is exposed to on TV or the internet. Discuss unrealistic images you see. Help her to identify and reject the distortions. Set limits and encourage alternative media, like the girl-run [New Moon Girl Media](#).
8. Be Your Brother's Keeper. Create a better world for your daughter by challenging other males when they show disrespect for women, objectify them, or make sexist remarks.
9. Promote respect for all shapes and sizes. Take stock of and change your prejudices.
10. Examine your own weight, eating, or body issues. Men are not immune; treat your own body well.
11. Maintain a diet-free home. Encourage enjoyment of food, moderate exercise, and a healthy, balanced lifestyle without rigid rules about food.
12. Emphasize inner beauty. Say what you value in her and others. Help her to see that she is more than an image to you.
13. Rid your home and workplace of anything that objectifies women and breeds body dissatisfaction or self degradation. Look around carefully and clean up your space.
14. Don't let adolescence scare you away. When she starts to develop sexually, stay close and involved, while respecting her need for more control and boundaries.
15. Keep caring women in her life to help her learn about her body and sexuality, especially if mom isn't around.
16. Raise better sons and boys. Challenge misogyny; share your values and respect for women and girls.
17. Let her get to know you. Share your life and interests with her. Be real and honest, and get out of the role of Superman. This will help her develop healthy relationships with other males.