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TOO LITTLE TIME.

- For a Dad, time is at a very high premium. Work eats up most of it, so task overload can. Mouths to feed, dishes to clean, clothes to wash, and all the chores and charms of home that need your attention. As a generalisation, try not to feel guilty if you leave the dishes in the sink overnight.
- Place the emphasis and importance on being with your children to play, read, or just simply talk.

FEELING OVERHELMED.

- It is difficult and challenging sometimes when you have many challenges to manage at once.
- Loneliness, stress, and depression are common for parents.
- Know that you are not alone. There are many others in your position who are experiencing the same things.
- Be sure to take time for yourself to recharge and strengthen your mind.

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES .

- A great many parents find themselves in financial distress.
- Keep in mind the things your kids *need* most from you is your love and attention.
- After that, separate the true needs from the pile and place top priority on them—things such as food, shelter, and clothing. Children don't always understand why they can't have everything they desire, but one day they will.

Where can I go for help ?

- Relationships Australia 1300 364 277
- Centacare Mackay 1300 523 985
- Anglicare 4953 3444
- Domestic Violence Resource Service 4957 3888
- Family Relationship Advice Line 1800 050 321
- Mensline Queensland 1800 600 636

Tips for Being a Dad

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Being a Dad :

Start with these simple routines:

- **Schedule meals at roughly the same time each day** (tired hungry kids have more frequent meltdowns)
- **Sit down and eat together**
- **Create a consistent bedtime routine**
- **Make sure your kids get enough sleep**
- **Share the household chores**
- **Create a homework spot**
- **Schedule homework for the same time each day**
- **Limit screen time—both TV and computer**
- **Encourage outdoor play**
- **Down time/free time is good for everyone**

Being a Dad:

Don't forget to consider:

- **Your family.** Sometimes it's hard to let go of past patterns, but your family may very much want to help—and they're probably eager to spend time with your kids.
- **Your ex.** If you're co-parenting, then your ex might be someone else you can count on now and then for backup. (In fact, giving one another the right to first refusal may already be included in your parenting plan.)
- **Your friends.** Think about the people you trust, who have been with you through thick and thin. These individuals are part of your community. It may take an extra effort to make plans and get together, but it's important not to let these relationships go unattended, as they can be a tremendous source of support and encouragement.
- **Your neighbours.** Be on the lookout for fellow parents in the area who might be able to provide backup child care in an emergency.

Being a Dad:

Much of it will be fun, but you'll also have to balance a mix of not-so-fun responsibilities ... from meal preparation to homework, errands, and doctor's appointments. Use these tips to create your own parenting style:

- **Make the everyday stuff fun.** Sometimes just adding a bit of FUN to the mix is all it takes to change your kids' attitude.
- **Develop closer relationships with your kids.** Don't just go through the motions. Take the time to check in with your kids every day to see how they're doing.
- **Be intentional.** You're a huge influence on your kids' self-esteem and outlook on life.
- **Be confident.** Believe in yourself. You may not know everything today, but you're learning and so are your kids.
- **Spend time with parents you admire.** Mimic what you think they're doing well. In time, it will feel second-nature .

Being a Dad:

- **Be an active listener.** Practice listening to your kids more than you speak. It's tough to do!
- **Tune in to their non-verbal cues.** What are your kids telling you with their body language? Are they saying :

*"Come closer, "I need a hug," or
"Leave me alone?"*

Tip: You don't have to do whatever it is that their visual cues are communicating; it just helps to tune in to that language when you can. It gives you more material to work with .

- **Ask questions.** To get your kids talking, ask open-ended questions that require more than "YES" or "NO" answers.
- **Pick your battles.** Finally, know when to back off or defer a conversation until later. Sometimes, being patient or letting something less-than-significant "slide" gives you the "in" to have a more important conversation when they're ready.