

KIDDISH

**20 IMMEDIATE
THINGS YOU
CAN DO TO BE
A BETTER DAD
TODAY**

Great dads, they come in all forms. Biological dads, stepdads, adoptive dads, foster dads, or any man who steps up as a father figure to a child. It's a role that carries enormous significance, extending far beyond their own child's life. Perhaps you were fortunate enough to have such a figure, shaping your vision of fatherhood. Or perhaps your journey was different, and you've drawn from your experiences, choosing to be the antithesis of what you've known, rectifying what wasn't right. Regardless, you aspire to be an exceptional dad. And that's what matters.

Now, if you're eager to roll up your sleeves and dive right into being a better dad, we've got you covered. Here are 20 immediate things you can do to be a better dad today:

Practice Active Listening: When your child shares their day, put down your phone, look into their eyes, and listen with undivided attention. Show them that their thoughts and feelings matter, and that you value their perspective. Active listening not only strengthens your bond but also helps them develop communication skills and emotional intelligence.

Lead by Example: As a role model, you can teach your kids about honesty, kindness, and integrity through your actions. Whether it's helping a neighbor, being polite to others, or admitting when you're wrong, your children will learn valuable life lessons from watching how you handle various situations.

Express Love and Affection: Never underestimate the power of affectionate gestures. A simple hug, a loving pat on the back, or saying 'I love you' can make your child feel secure and cherished. Regular expressions of love create a strong emotional foundation for them to thrive.

Be Present: In this busy world, give your children the gift of your presence. When spending time with them, let go of distractions and fully engage. Show genuine interest in their activities, conversations, and achievements. Being present communicates that they are a priority in your life.

Encourage Independence: Allow your kids to explore and learn on their own. While it's natural to want to protect them, encouraging independence helps build their confidence and problem-solving skills. Offer guidance and support as they take on age-appropriate challenges.

Set Boundaries with Love: Establishing boundaries doesn't mean being strict or cold. Approach discipline with love and empathy, explaining the reasons behind the rules. This approach helps your children understand consequences and the importance of making responsible choices.

Play and Have Fun: Playtime isn't just for kids. Join in their games and adventures, letting your inner child shine. Engaging in fun activities together builds trust, strengthens your connection, and creates lasting memories filled with laughter and joy.

Help with Homework: Showing interest in your child's education can boost their academic success. Sit down with them and offer help or guidance when they're doing homework. Your involvement sends a message that learning is essential and that you support their growth.

Teach Life Skills: Beyond school, teach your kids practical life skills that will serve them well as adults. Cooking together, fixing household items, or even budgeting can instill independence and self-sufficiency.

Express Gratitude: Model gratitude by saying 'thank you' genuinely and often. Encourage your kids to acknowledge the kindness of others and be grateful for the blessings in their lives. Gratitude fosters positivity and a sense of contentment.

Apologize and Forgive: Show your children that apologizing is a sign of strength, not weakness. When you make a mistake, apologize sincerely and discuss how you'll do better next time. Likewise, teach them to forgive others to cultivate empathy and compassion.

Encourage Healthy Habits: Prioritize your family's well-being by promoting healthy habits. Engage in physical activities together, cook nutritious meals, and ensure everyone gets enough sleep. These habits lay the foundation for a healthy lifestyle.

Be Patient and Understanding: Parenting can be challenging, and it's normal to feel overwhelmed. Demonstrate patience when your child makes mistakes or needs time to learn. Being understanding creates a safe space for open communication.

Support Their Passions: Take an interest in your child's hobbies and interests, even if they differ from your own. Show enthusiasm and encouragement for their pursuits, as it instills a sense of confidence and self-expression.

Celebrate Achievements: Acknowledge and celebrate your child's accomplishments, big or small. Whether it's a good grade, a sports achievement, or simply showing kindness, celebrate their efforts to motivate and inspire continued success.

Create Traditions: Family traditions create cherished memories and a sense of belonging. Establish unique rituals, whether it's a weekly game night, a yearly vacation, or a special holiday tradition. These traditions strengthen your family bond and provide stability.

Manage Stress Positively: Show your kids healthy ways to cope with stress, such as taking a walk, practicing deep breathing, or engaging in hobbies. By modeling positive stress management, you equip them with valuable tools for navigating life's challenges.

Read Together: Reading together fosters a love for learning and imagination. Choose age-appropriate books and take turns reading aloud. Discuss the stories, characters, and lessons to make it an interactive and enjoyable experience.

Encourage Communication: Create an open environment where your child feels comfortable expressing themselves. Encourage open dialogue about their feelings, thoughts, and concerns. By being approachable and supportive, you strengthen your connection and mutual trust.

Say 'I Love You' Every Day: Remind your child how much they mean to you by saying 'I love you' daily. This simple yet powerful phrase reinforces the unbreakable bond between you and instills a sense of security and belonging in your child's heart.

Remember, being a great dad is a continuous journey, and these daily actions can have a profound impact on your children's growth and development. Embrace the joys and challenges of fatherhood, and let your love guide your way.

Children are the ultimate test of our patience. They have a unique knack for pushing every button, filling us with pride, evoking worry, making our hearts swell with love, and driving us to the brink of insanity – often all in a single day. Yet, if we allow it, our children have the power to mold us into better individuals – more accepting, forgiving, and compassionate, not just towards our own kids but towards all children.

So, what defines a great dad? It's the unwavering acknowledgment of the privilege it is to be someone's father, a realization that is etched into his heart each and every day.