
Dads

Parents who are on their own know that they are the sole carer of their children. When both parents have that responsibility there is a natural assumption that the care will be shared.

While we have moved some distance from the stereotype of mum taking on all the work associated with the child – rearing, there are still families where mothers feel unsupported by their partner. Moaning about the lack of help will not change the situation. While some Dads do share the care, it still seems far from equal.

There may be many reasons for this - one of which is that Dads feel that their role is less crucial to the children's upbringing than the role of the mother. They may feel they get in the way and if they try to help they won't do the task properly. Furthermore the Dad's experience of his own upbringing may not have provided him with the knowledge and skills of what he should do with his own children.

Mothers who feel there is a lack of sufficient involvement from the children's father need to start talking about the importance of Dad being a hands-on father. Dads need to know that their input is not just about helping out, but about the positive influence he can have on the children.

There is powerful evidence to show that fathers' involvement can help many aspects of their children's lives such as health, well-being, confidence, self-esteem, educational achievement and can reduce the chances of their children turning to crime.

Q.

My partner is a loving man and 'good' father to the children but he takes me for granted, assuming that I will do all the hard work for the children while he gets to do the nice bits. It's gone on for nine years now and I think I deserve some time for me.

A.

You have been very patient! A recent TV programme shows mothers going on strike and leaving the home for two days. Dads had to do everything for the children. The Dads became aware of the constant demands of the children and discovered the enormous number of tasks that have to be done daily - just to keep the family going. Whether you try that tactic or sitting down and having a good chat is up to you. Whatever the approach, it is much more likely to bring about change if you talk about all the many benefits to the children of a closer interaction and not just moan about your situation. Of course it is unfair that you should have the lion's share of the child-rearing, but you may get more action from your partner if let him know that the children are missing out by not having an involved father.

