



“How Well Am I Doing as My Daughter’s Father?”

Here is a short Dads and Daughters self-assessment quiz. It’s a quick way to understand how well you’re doing as your daughter’s father. Answer honestly and add up your score before peeking at the scoring key. If your daughter isn’t school-aged, skip the 5 school-related items and subtract 15 points from the scoring key.

		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, 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	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	1	2	3
26	I tell my daughter stories about my own youth	1	2	3
	For dads who live AWAY from their daughters			
27	I initiate contact with her at least 5 times a week	1	2	3
28	I ask how she feels transitioning to and from my home	1	2	3
29	I demonstrate respect for her mother and stepparent(s)	1	2	3
30	I fulfill my visitation and support commitments	1	2	3
	For dads who live WITH their daughters (extra credit for live-away dads)			
27	I volunteer to help with her extracurricular activities	1	2	3
28	I take my daughter to school	1	2	3
29	I visit my daughter’s school during the school day	1	2	3
30	I take my daughter to work with me	1	2	3
	Total Points			

If you scored-

30-35: Your relationship with your daughter looks like it’s on very solid ground

36-45: You appear to have a good foundation, but there are places to improve

46-60: You probably need active steps to re-examine your attitudes and learn ways to build deeper respect for each other.

61-90: It’s time to consider serious change. Your actions and attitudes may be undermining your daughter.

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Ten Tips for Live-Away Dads

(For Dads who live away from their children due to divorce, separation or conflict with the child's mother)

- 1) Hang in there for the long haul. My involvement in my daughter's life may be different than my dreams for the two of us when she was little, but it is no less important. I remain a tremendous influence in her life and need to stay involved in a calm, loving and committed way forever.
- 2) Develop healthy social and emotional supports for myself. Some live-away dads struggle to handle anger and loneliness with maturity. These feelings are normal, but I must be careful not to become emotionally dependent on my daughter. Instead, I need to spend time with healthy adults and get my emotional and social needs met through them.
- 3) Remember that my daughter lives in two homes. I need to be patient if my daughter doesn't do chores or follow rules the way I want. She has different rules in her mother's house. She may sometimes be upset or moody when she leaves my home or her mother's home. I need to remember that my relationship with her is much more important than getting her to do things the way I think she should.
- 4) Father the best I can when she is with me. I cannot change how her mother raises her or make up for what her mother does or doesn't do. I can't correct excessive leniency by her mother with excessive strictness on my part. Instead, I need to father her calmly. Give her choices. Be a patient and loving father, not a demanding and critical perfectionist. Be the dad she can always talk to and trust to support her -- even when she makes mistakes.
- 5) Keep my daughter out of the middle—even if her mother doesn't. Talk well about my daughter's mother even when I'm angry at her -- and even if she talks poorly about me. Negative talk about my daughter's mother is a little wound to my daughter, and causes her to think less of herself, her mom and me. I'll resolve adult conflicts away from my daughter and allow her to be the child.
- 6) My daughter and her mother are different people. I'll not misdirect anger at my daughter's mother toward my daughter. When my daughter does not listen to me, does less than her best in school or makes other mistakes (normal behaviors for most kids), I'll be careful not to confuse my daughter's mistakes with her mother's actions, and instead, see what I can do to make things better.
- 7) Give my daughter consistent time and attention. My daughter needs my healthy attention in person, on the phone, over the internet, through the mail, or any other way. I can't try to buy her love with things--even if her mother does. My daughter needs my presence not my presents.
- 8) Listen to my daughter. Lecturing and arguing get me nowhere. It does not help if I minimize my daughter's feelings or falsely tell her everything will be okay when I can't guarantee that it will. Instead, I need to listen and be there for her. Accept my daughter 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'll take the lead in communicating -- even when I feel unappreciated. I may not agree with everything she says or does, but when I listen, I build the emotional connection that will help her listen to me when it really counts.
- 9) Focus on my daughter's positives. Many men were raised by fathers pointing out what we did wrong, so we could fix it. That may work on the job, but intimate personal relationships are not like a job. Focusing on negatives undermines her strength and confidence—already stretched by living in two homes.
- 10) Be her father, not her mother. I am a powerful and encouraging role model, and I'll tell her that she has a special place in my heart. My masculine actions and loving words can help her realize that she too can be adventurous, playful and successful -- and should expect respect from affectionate, honorable men.

Created by DADs advisor William C. Klatte, author of Live-Away Dads (Penguin, 1999)

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10 Tips for Dads with Daughters

1) Listen to girls. Focus on what is really important--what my daughter 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 for her true self, I give her confidence to use her talents in the world.

2) Encourage her strength and celebrate her savvy. Help my daughter learn to recognize, resist and overcome barriers. Help her develop her strengths to achieve her goals, help other people and help herself. Help her be what Girls Incorporated calls *Strong, Smart and Bold!*

3) Respect her uniqueness, urge her to love her body and discourage dieting. Make sure my daughter knows that I love her for who she is and see her as a whole person, capable of anything. My daughter is likely to choose a life partner who acts like me and has my values. So, treat her and those she loves with respect. Remember 1) growing girls need to eat often and healthy; 2) dieting doesn't work over the long haul and increases the risk of problems like eating disorders and depression; and 3) she has her body for what it can do, not how it looks. Advertisers spend billions to convince my daughter she doesn't look "right." *I won't buy into it.*

4) Get physically active with her. Play catch, tag, jump rope, basketball, Frisbee, hockey, soccer, or just take walks...you name it! Help her learn the great things her body can do. Physically active girls are less likely to get pregnant, drop out of school, or put up with an abuse. Studies show that the most physically active girls have fathers who are active with them. Being physically active with her is a great investment!

5) Get involved in my daughter's school. Volunteer, chaperone, read to her class. Ask tough questions, like: Does the school have and use media literacy and body image awareness programs? Does it tolerate sexual harassment of boys or girls? Do more boys take advanced math and science classes and if so, why? (California teacher Doug Kirkpatrick's girl students weren't interested in science, so he changed his methods and their participation soared!) Are at least half the student leaders girls?

6) Get involved in my daughter's activities. Volunteer to drive, coach, direct a play, teach a class—anything! Demand equality. Texas mortgage officer and volunteer basketball coach Dave Chapman was so appalled by the gym his 9-year-old daughter's team had to use, he fought to open the modern "boy's" gym to the girls' team. He succeeded. Dads make a difference!

7) Help make the world better for girls. This world holds dangers for our daughters. But my over-protection doesn't work, and it tells my daughter that I don't trust her! Instead, work with other parents to demand an end to violence against females, media sexualization of girls, pornography, advertisers making billions feeding on our daughters' insecurities, and all "boys are more important than girls" attitudes.

8) Take my daughter to work with me. Participate in April's Take Our Daughters to Work® Day and make sure my business participates. Show her how I pay the bills and manage my money. My daughter will have a job and pay rent some day, so I need to introduce her to the world of work and finances!

9) Support positive alternative media for girls. Watch programs with your family that portray smart savvy girls. Subscribe to healthy girl-edited magazines like *New Moon* and visit online girl-run "zines" and websites. It's not enough to condemn what's bad, I must support and use media that support my daughter!

10) Talk to other fathers. Together, we fathers have reams of experience, expertise and encouragement to share. There's a lot we can learn from each other. And we can have a lot of influence – for example, Dads and Daughters protests stop negative ads. We can make the world better for girls when we work together!

To learn more about the nonprofit group Dads and Daughters, visit www.dadsanddaughters.org or call 1-888-824-DADS

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