



# 10 Tips

## FOR LIVE AWAY DADS



**As a father living apart from your child,** it is natural to sometimes feel like you are not in tune with your son or daughter.

Whether divorced or traveling for work, not seeing your child on a daily basis makes it harder to feel as if you are functioning as a full-time dad.

But despite the physical distance, you can take steps to assure your child that your love is unconditional, everlasting and active.

Here are ways to nurture and protect the relationship:

**1: Get your own place.** Having your own living quarters makes it easier for your child to adjust to a second home, ideally one that is stable and safe.

**2: Create a consistent routine.** Connect with your child regularly by phone, social media such as Skype or Face Time or through a set visitation schedule. Commit to a predictable routine.

**3: Share an interest or activity.** This bonding time can include a hobby or another activity that you and your children enjoy doing and discussing when together and apart.

**4: Think twice** before introducing a new “significant other.” As exciting as finding a new love interest may be, avoid introductions until after the relationship is considered serious and long-term.

**5: Express your love.** With the physical distance and other changes, your child may feel unsure of his or her place in your life. Be sure to explain that he or she is a top priority no matter where you live or what you do.

**6: Avoid negative talk** in front of your child. He or she doesn't need to hear you arguing with your ex or speaking negatively about her. Your child may already be dealing with emotional challenges and negative behavior from two of the people he or she loves most.

**7: Plan weekend activities.** Be creative. Brainstorm together a list of fun activities. Being active together gives your child something to look forward to while preventing boredom.

**8: Create and reinforce your house rules.** Now that your child lives in two different homes, it is important he or she learn to adapt to and respect each set of rules.

**9: Include your child in your new family.** If you have re-married or moved in with your partner and her kids, your child may feel resentful. It is crucial to help your child to feel a part of the new family.

**10: Take care of yourself.** Keep yourself well. It may be tempting to neglect your health during times of stress, but being at the top of your game is the best way to cope and serve as a role model in the process. Seek support, even professional counseling, if necessary.

**Be the best dad you can be by maintaining a constant connection to meet your child's needs.**



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1-800-552-7096 Virginia Child Abuse Hotline (language line available)

800-Children (800-244-5373) Parent Helpline