

Do You 'Get It' When It Comes to Being a Father?

Are you actively practicing the habits associated with great fathering?

Here at the National Center, most of our materials are based on research about fathering. And quite often we see that research confirmed when we interview great dads about how they live out Championship Fathering.

Since those real-life guys may not have studied my book, they don't say, "Well, you see, being a good dad is all about loving, coaching and modeling." (You can see more specifics about each of those [here](#).)

But our staff will tell you that when they hear a dad mention certain fathering habits or topics, they know that guy really *gets it*. He incorporates traits and attitudes that translate into great fathering.

Here are four of those most critical habits:

1. They express love. Some dads will say things like, "Susie knows I love her because she sees me doing things for her and with her." And that's a valid perspective. Kids do feel loved when their dads are involved and help care for them. But dads also need to say it: "I love you, and there's nothing you can do to change that." They put their own discomfort or ego aside and say it often because kids need to hear it.

2. They ignore the costs. Some dads might be committed to their families, but they're constantly thinking about what they've sacrificed to be a father: things they enjoy, money, job advancement and so on. But devoted dads realize it isn't sacrifice but an intentional investment in something more important than those other things.

3. They acknowledge the impact of loving their child's mother.

This doesn't mean there are no great single or divorced dads, but that dad/mom partnership is a big factor. And it speaks volumes when dads recognize the great security kids gain when they see that their dad and mom love each other and work together for the children's benefit.

4. They see the bigger picture. They recognize that healthy fathering reaches beyond the walls of their own homes and encourage kids who don't have a dad. They see that engaged fathers and father figures can truly change the culture, because many of society's issues will be helped when caring, responsible men step up and care for children.

What about you, Dad? Do you *get it*? I hope these qualities challenge you, like they challenge me, to be more committed to family tomorrow than you are today.

So, what's on your "dads who get it" list? What would you add? What qualities stand out most for you when you see them in devoted dads? Please leave a comment below.

Action Points for Dads on the Fathering Journey

- Write a short note to each of your children that simply communicates your love. (If your child is too young to read, write the note, put the date on it, and save it for when he/she is older.)
- Are your children getting enough of your focused time and attention? Maybe there's room for more adjustments as you live out your priorities. What could you put on hold to free yourself up so you can give more of yourself to your children?
- Get together with your children's mom to discuss each child's development and challenges and how the two of you can work together to encourage and guide them more effectively. If you're divorced and don't get along with their mom, meet at a neutral place and make it clear you

simply want to do better at helping the kids thrive; don't get into past hurts or mistakes.

- Next time you're doing a one-on-one activity with your child, include one of his/her friends who doesn't have a dad or doesn't see him often.
- If you read today's blog and were convicted of ways you need to improve as a dad, use this as a wake-up call, an *opportunity* to make lasting, positive changes on behalf of your children.

Carey Casey is the CEO of the National Center for Fathering, a nonprofit organization dedicated to changing the culture of fathering in America by enlisting 6.5 million fathers who to make the Championship Fathering Commitment. Subscribe to his weekly email tip by clicking here: "Yes! I want tips on how to be a great dad who loves, coaches, mentors and inspires my children."