

# 8 Easy Ways That Dads Can Affirm their Kids.

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Dads have an important job description – to paint an accurate image of God the Father by the brush of their example. Dads have an irreplaceable role in the family. The foundation for your kids' emotional security and spiritual maturity is rooted in their experience of being your child. One-way dads can image the heavenly Father is by affirming his children as God the Father did for Jesus on the day of His Baptism, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Here are eight practical ways to affirm your kids.

## #1 Spoken Words:

At any given moment you can speak a word of encouragement, "Hey, Hannah, I've noticed how positive you've been with your younger siblings. I really appreciate it and so do they. Well done." Verbal affirmation does not have to be elaborate, but it must be sincere.

## #2 Quality Time:

Busyness is a modern-day curse. In the absence

of margin, what you do with your free time communicates what matters most to you. Your kids know how busy you are, giving them quality time speaks a loud message of love to their hearts. Kids spell love T.I.M.E. (thank you Steve Wood).

## #3 Lunch Bag Notes:

Take out an index card and write something like, "Five Incredible Qualities I See in You: 1) You always work hard during soccer practice, 2) You clean up after you make a mess in the kitchen, 3) You use your words to bless others, 4) You have a deep peace in your heart when life gets stressful, 5) You are generous with your video games."

Full disclosure: I learned this idea from Author, Anthony Parisi. For 20 years my wife and I have written affirming messages to our kids as part of our celebration of Valentine's Day. The messages are written onto heart-shaped card stock and placed under our plastic table cover on the dining table. Another way to encourages their hearts.

## #4 Surprise Gifts:

Pick up a gift for no reason other than to say, "I was thinking of you." The gift does not have to be expensive. A carton of chocolate milk after soccer practice is one of my favorites. I can pick it up at any gas station for less than \$2. As the kids get older,

chocolate milk has turned into coffee. The art of gift-giving may not come naturally to you, but somebody in your life can probably help you find the right gift.

### **#5 Honor Them Publicly:**

This takes a little awareness to recognize an appropriate moment. When your child is within earshot, speak of them to others about some virtue or another that you see in him/her. The book of Proverbs encourages this kind of affirmation, “Not with your own mouth, but let others praise you,” Parents are in a great place to praise their kids. Modesty will guard against exaggeration, but simple and sincere words, spoken in public, can build a child’s confidence and sense of dignity.

### **#6 Express Physical Affection:**

This is easier when the kids are young but the need to express physical affection never diminishes. Teenagers give the appearance that they are not interested and some days it just will not work but it is important to keep trying. At any moment, a quick love-tap on the knee with, “You’re awesome,” goes a long way. If hugging makes you squirm (or your child!), a hand on the shoulder can communicate the same message.

### **#7 Attend to Their Heart:**

It is a powerful experience for children when someone in authority, especially dads, seeks to understand their feelings. It is not what happens to your kids that matters but the meaning they attach to it that makes the impact, positive or negative. Creating a safe place for your child to process the emotional roller-coaster of life is incredibly validating. You may not agree with their perspective but understanding how they feel and loving them for their sincere heart, deepens the bond between you and them.

### **#8 Celebrate Good Decisions:**

Parenting is about helping your kids learn how to make good decisions. In fact, if you succeed in this area, you have given your child one of the best gifts, “a wise and discerning heart.” When your kids make a smart decision, celebrate it! Honor the small decisions in the moment, “Sarah, I saw you outside. The boys wanted you to play basketball, but you decided to come in and finish your homework. That was a hard decision, but you made the right choice, well done. Character has its own reward.” Make a big deal of the bigger decisions. Propose a toast at the family meal or take everyone out for ice-cream to acknowledge their milestone.

The less there is of something in the world, the more valuable it becomes. Affirmation is valuable because many of us live without it. Dads, let affirmation fill your house and watch your kids soar!