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# Single & parenting: Tips for the newly single parent

In today's COVID age, our lives have changed. It's easier to be a single parent as we work from home. This gives us more time with our children, which is a blessing.



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Set a time just for them and make them feel they are the ones who matter the most. No phones, no computers, read or just talk to them. (Source: Getty/Thinkstock)

By Dr Malini Saba

In today's world, there are many men and women deciding to be single parents and sometimes it's the best thing, for bringing up the child in a happy home. All parents, married or single, face the same type of issues, how you handle them is what matters the most. The biggest hurdle for a new single parent is sleep and the first six months are the hardest. Single parents will also be juggling work and childcare, which can be socially isolating.

1. Make sure you and the child have a schedule or routine. Be consistent and don't change your routine. For example, if the child cries, don't just pick her/him up. Do not let your children's need for attention turn into demands for attention.



2. Remember to always show your love and praise to your child. Even after you scold them make sure you end it with a quality you love about them.
3. Quality time is the key. Set a time just for them and make them feel they are the ones who matter the most. No phones, no computers, read or just talk to them.
4. Set limits. Always set house rules from the beginning, around what time they eat, sleep and play. From the time they start to sit up and play, make sure you show them how to put their toys back where they took it from.
5. Don't feel guilty. Parents always feel guilt. Never spoil your child to make up for being a single parent.
6. Always take care of yourself. Exercise, go about your daily routine. The child will learn from you. Always give yourself a timeout.
7. Lean on others. We all have family or good friends. If you have a support system, use it for advice and just a sounding board for you.
8. If you are going to date, always put your child first. Not the other way around. Your child must come first and consider how that person will impact your child.
9. You are their role model. What a child requires is understanding, nurturing and love. You want to always give the child a safe environment where their skills and emotional intelligence is enhanced. This is a key to their success.
10. Look for opportunities to be positive. Avoid making broad, negative statements about the opposite sex. Remember, as a single parent, what you say matters and always make sure the child grows up looking at the positive aspects of both sexes.
11. If you are the sole breadwinner or getting support from the child's other parent, always stay positive. Never say anything negative about the other person. The child has to grow up in a neutral zone. They are not there to be your mini me, or become your surrogate. Be very mindful of this mistake.
12. Show you are always interested in your child. Always ask them about their favourite book, movies and games. Chat about their friends at school or childcare.
13. It's easy to let your adult thoughts and feelings spill out, particularly when dealing with stress, such as financial worries, but it's very important to keep your adult thoughts separate from the child.

In today's COVID age, our lives have changed. It's easier to be a single parent as we work from home. This gives us more time with our children, which is a blessing. Use it wisely, it's all about balance and staying positive, knowing that what you put out is what you will get back.

Your child is a sponge. How you treat them and time you give them is what they will give you back when they grow up. Remember, being a parent is the best job in the world.

*(The writer is Founder & Chairman, Anannke Foundation & Saba Group Holdings. She is a psychologist, fitness enthusiast, author, single-mom, social rights activist, global advocate for women and girls and philanthropist)*

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