



Tips for Parents: Stay at Home Dads (SAHD)

It's interesting that one of the biggest issues stay at home dads have to deal with is not learning how to change diapers, getting their baby to sleep, or helping the baby learn to walk, but rather, the prejudice of a society that sees stay at home fathers as being less masculine, unable to provide for their families financially, or incompetent at caring for infants and children.

Regardless of these perceptions, hundreds of thousands of men in the United States have chosen to be the primary caregiver for their children—and the number is increasing every year. The reasons for this are varied, but one of the most common is financial: the wife earns more money, has better career prospects, or her job provides health insurance. Other popular reasons include:

- The woman prefers to work out of the home and child care is undesirable or too expensive.
- The man wants to take a more active role in his children's lives than previous generations have done.
- The couple puts less emphasis on traditional gender roles and each focuses on the tasks that they are the most skilled at or in which they have the most interest.

Studies show that the men that find being a stay at home dad the most rewarding are the ones that willingly choose it rather than being forced into it for purely economic reasons.

Who Benefits when Dad Stays Home?

Contrary to popular belief, research shows that children benefit the most when both parents take an active, hands on role in raising them; rather than one parent being the caregiver and the other the breadwinner. A woman that works outside of the home while her partner stays home with the children typically is just as involved in the child's life as her stay at home counterparts.

Research also shows that children that have involved, caring fathers are much more likely to grow into compassionate, caring adults.

Many mothers, too, benefit from their husband caring for the kids. A woman may find her career very rewarding, and resent having to give it up when her spouse is perfectly happy to stay home and well equipped to provide safe, competent and loving care for the kids.

Stay at home fathers benefit from the situation when they, too, find the time with their children rewarding and put it at a higher priority than income or societal status.

In a nutshell, when both spouses are supportive of the situation, everyone in the family benefits.

Overcoming Society's Perceptions

As mentioned above, many men that become stay at home fathers quickly find that their peers no longer relate to them or even respect them. They may lose the camaraderie of the workplace and become lonely and isolated. As a result, many fathers have started or joined online forums, communities or support groups, or have formed local groups where fathers and kids can get together for play dates and friendship with those in which they have much in common.

Concerns about Remaining Employable

There's a belief that men that drop out of the work force for an extended period of time to take care of children lose their ability to compete, may not be able to remain relevant and find a job when they're ready to return, or if they do find work, will earn much less than if they'd stayed in the job force.

While this certainly can happen, many stay at home dads have found a way to remain viable: they continue networking, keep their skills and credentials current, and even work part time doing consulting or moonlighting work.

A Winning Choice

Not every man makes a good stay at home father; but truthfully, not every woman does either. Research indicates that in general, children raised by fathers that have willingly chosen to be stay at home dads flourish. Wives benefit when they opt to pursue a fulfilling career, and dads are able to nourish their care giving sides, especially if they seek outside contact from other stay at home dads.

For more information:

Wikipedia's article on [Stay at Home Dads](#)

AtHomeDad.org (discussions, Q&A, articles, blogs, local groups, forums, etc.)

[Fatherhood.org](#)

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