

Dad

TO HANG OUT WITH YOUR CHILD THINK ABOUT HOW THEY PLAY

THE ART OF PLAY

Mark Shepherd is of African Caribbean heritage. He is a child minder and former home dad who spent two years studying how to play with young children. He advises: "For children, whatever they are doing, it involves effort, and they care about what you think. So if they show you something they have done, say things like, 'You've spent a lot of time doing that.' They are not asking you whether it's good, because, in a child's eye, everything they do is good, it's the best they can do. If you jump in too quickly and say, 'That's a wonderful picture of a car,' when actually it's a ship, you'll knock his confidence. He will think he's no good at drawing ships."

PLAY DAD – MARK'S TIPS FOR SIMPLE, CHEAP GAMES

Treasure baskets Fill a basket, bucket or saucepan with household items such as spoons, sit your child between your legs and he'll play happily for 30 minutes.

Cups and stones Literally a few plastic cups and some stones. One day a stone will be money, another food, another wall-building material. From six months to five years.

Cleaning Let him help you with the chores. If you're sweeping, give him a little brush. If you're shaving, let him soap your face.

Supermarket shopping Can be a big release for your child. Big, safe places to run and slide, trolleys to push. Great fun.

Tongue-holding competitions Great when everyone is getting too noisy and excited. See how long they can hold their tongues with their hands.

Washing up Give them a few pots and pans to wash up. They'll get wet. Your kitchen will get messy. But it's great fun.

Paper mosaics Cut up bits of paper, preferably coloured, into inch squares. Then let the kids stick them together into patterns.

Make cards for someone you haven't seen lately. Grandparents love to get one. Think glitter.

Hide and seek But don't find her too quickly – she'll try the same places again and again.

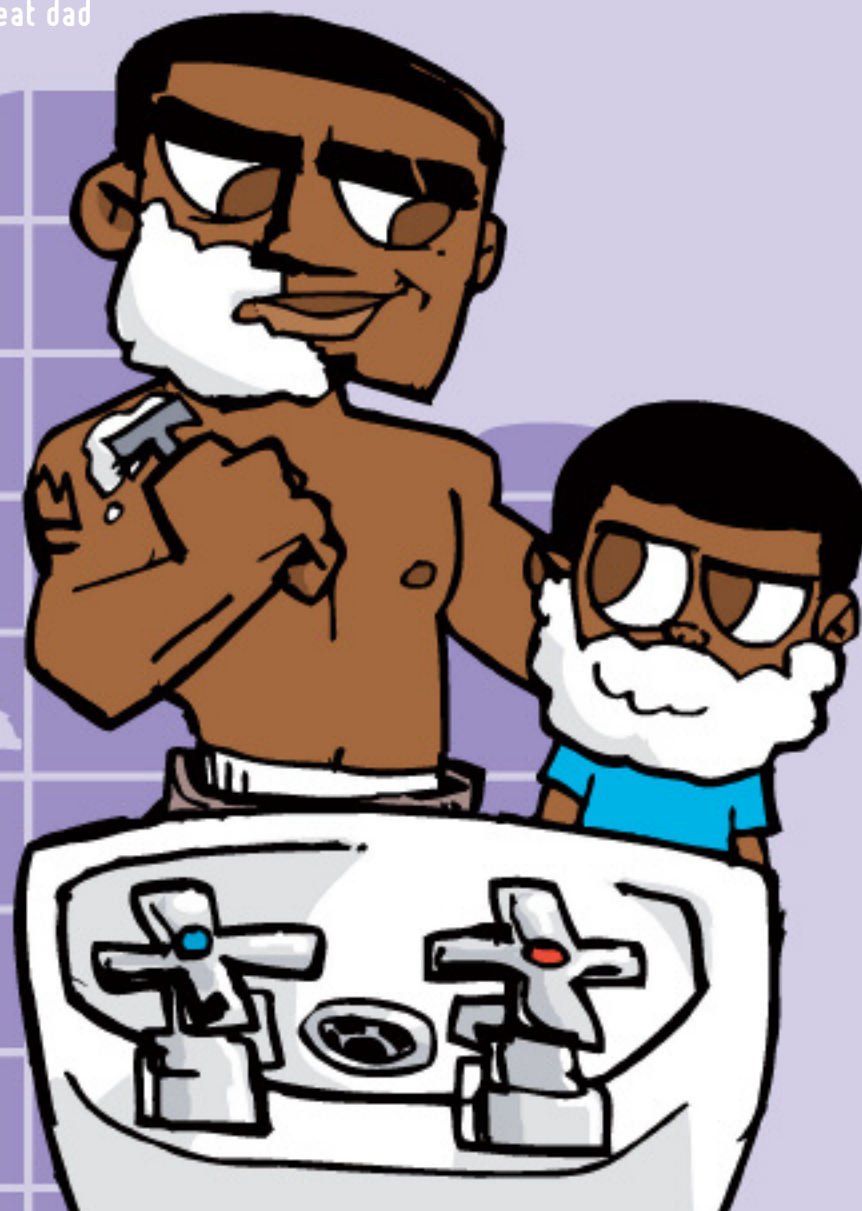
Make a picnic All you need is a few pieces of bread, fillings, fruit and drinks. Let him help make and wrap up the sandwiches.

The playground There's no place like it for exploring, swinging and meeting people. Great for both of you.

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Dad

Great dad



Dad

GAIN A LITTLE WISDOM FROM SOME EXPERIENCED BLACK FATHERS

"I'm not bothered by blood. I was there for the whole delivery...Nothing can compare. I've won stuff in my life. Nothing can beat that. Nothing at all. It's on another level. I just couldn't speak. I was speechless. We did that. That's us. Just looking at her." **Thierry Henry, new father of Téa**

"You're trying to build their confidence. So it's important to let them do things without you getting too involved. But, sometimes, they don't know how to do it, so you start playing yourself, drawing, painting, building, and then they'll want to do it too. You don't ignore them when they say, 'Dad, look at what I've done.' You have to listen carefully."
Mark Shepherd, childminder, father of two (see back page for Mark's tips)

"Becoming a dad was hard at 17. It was a big responsibility. I was still at college: I was going to do a business and finance course and then go into travel and tourism. Then Shanice was born and my hopes and dreams deteriorated. It was very daunting, though I knew it would be alright. I was 11 when my brother was born. I remember changing his nappy and feeding him. I would cope." **Darren Ramsay, contestant in the first Big Brother series and BBC Food presenter**

"I'm neither. My favourite role is father." **Lenny Kravitz, after being asked whether he prefers being a rock god or a sex god.**

"A dad comes now and then to give the mother money. But a father is there for his child whenever. He speaks to his child, advises his child, makes the child see the world. I see myself as a father because my dad was a dad." **Richard, 19, gym instructor and father of Ceriese, aged one**



"I set out to have a child so young because I didn't think I'd live to see 21 and I wanted to see my child before I died." **Hasim Rahman, former World Boxing Champion**

"I know my father – through my brothers and sisters and my mother, and through my music." **Damian Marley, son of Bob who died in 1981 when Damian was just two.**

"When one of the screws said that my girlfriend was in labour. I couldn't believe it. When she brought the baby in three weeks later, she was so beautiful. But she cried when I took her because she did not know me. She was five months old when I came out and now she stays with me on weekends, the rest of the time with her mum. We just stay in with her at my mum's or go shopping for baby clothes. I bring her back at night because I'm waiting for a bed for her from the catalogue. I want her to be happy with me and treat me like a normal dad." **Joel, 21**

"You have to be careful not to beat them over the head so much they start looking over their shoulders for something that may not be there." **Denzel Washington on discussing anti-racism with his four children.**

"Daddy, you are my constant truth, my strength, my heaven on earth. Thank you for being there for me. Thank you for believing in me. Thank you for holding my hand in the dark and always standing by me. You are my inspiration." **Laila Yasmeen Ali, daughter of Mohammed Ali**

"I have my youth and energy. I have time to do what my little boy enjoys. I can see life growing in him, every little advancement. But it's taken me two years to get the feel for being a father. I've had to take it all in. At first, I felt like an alien." **Jake, 21, single dad, father of Zak, aged 2**

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character. I have a dream today." **Martin Luther King Jnr**

"Children are a treasure, the wealth of any country. They are the future leaders of society and the entire nation. But in order to play that role, they must be given support. They must be given education. Their health must be looked after. And, above all, they must be given love."
Nelson Mandela, father of six, four of whom have died.

REAL MEN TALK WHEN THINGS GET TOUGH

Parentline Plus Support and information for dads and mums

0808 800 2222 www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Fathers Matter helpline 01268 556328

Babyfather helpline 020 8551 0011 / 07814 984387