



Single Parenting

The Facts

Single families are defined as households that consist of one parent per child or set of children that live together. Being a single parent brings forth many challenges and responsibilities. Financially, socially and emotionally a single parent will have to deal with a number of added pressures. Raising a child alone does not mean that a child will not have the substantial amount of parental guidance. Rather, it just means that changes will need to be made in order to continue the healthy growth of the family and child.

Steps & Changes

The first step in taking control of this issue is to learn about single parenting and about the ways that one can initiate the skills needed in handling the situation. By joining a local support group or by talking to a counselor, single parents can gain essential advice which will guide them into maintaining a successful household.

Resources for Single Parents include:

- Family and Friends
- Single parent organizations
- Community and/or government agencies
- Local churches or religious organizations
- Health Centers
- Employee Assistance Programs provided by employers

Secondly a parent should define the types of changes that they will have to face. These alterations in family life may include:

Child Care

When faced with parenting alone, childcare becomes essential in a single parents daily life, unless they work at home or if the child is old enough to stay at home alone. In most cases, single parents turn to child-care for added assistance. In doing so, they may look towards in-home care, child-care centers, school programs or family day-care homes for help. When acquiring about these types of support, a parent should research the child-care outlets they have sought, interview a list of various options and always check the caregiver's references.



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Money Management

Basically this means that single parents will need to budget their monthly income. This is probably the most tangible challenge they will face, because now the household only has one income versus a dual, monthly stipend. Alterations in spending and lifestyle may need to be changed if their budget is in a deficit. To better manage their money, a single parent may cut back on how much they are spending, try to conserve energy, thus saving money on bills, and/or partake in economical entertainment for the family and for themselves.

Time Management

From work to appointments, a single parents schedule is going to fill up fast. A significant step to take in managing these tough schedules, is to first prioritize the tasks. If possible, a single parent should try to work with their employer in finding a work schedule that will assist with other priorities. They should also try to plan things ahead. In example, by marking down all of the family's appointments, meetings and events onto a central calendar that is accessible by all. Than by planning things accordingly to that calendar, a single parent can successfully tackle their daily regiment.

Household Management

This step begins with prioritizing chores according to what can be realistically completed. In trying to finish the tasks a parent should seek help from their child/children. By cleaning up after themselves and helping out around the house, a child will gain personal responsibility.

Parent and Child Relationships

Parental support is essential in maintaining a healthy relationship with children. Support can steer from being a good role model, talking to a child about their lives, becoming active in a child's education, creating a regular set of disciplinary rules and by loving and encouraging the child. The most important thing to remember to do is to set time aside for the child/children. This will help build your relationship and emotional support.

Personal Management

In trying to manage all of these tasks a single parent should not forget about themselves. By eating right, getting a substantial amount of sleep and exercise, avoiding alcohol and drugs and by scheduling time for themselves, single parents will be able to manage and handle anything that comes their way.

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