Great Benefits!

A great Dad keeps work and family in balance.

Over half of Hawai'i’s children live with two employed parents, and another 20 percent live with a single parent. Men and women are now often sharing responsibility for family income and for raising the children. It is important to balance your time and effort between work and other family responsibilities.

A great Dad plays with and helps care for his kids.

Dad is not just another version of “Mom.” Men are often more playful. Your involvement has big payoffs for your young children: higher IQ levels, longer attention spans, and more eagerness for learning.

A great Dad communicates with his kids.

A great Dad listens, really listens, to his kids. It takes maintaining high expectations, teaching and encouraging good behavior, giving serious criticism in private, and motivating from the heart. You can discipline in ways that build your child’s character and self-esteem.

A great Dad disciplines his kids with fairness.

Many people think discipline and punishment mean the same thing. A great Dad knows that discipline means teaching and encouraging good behavior, while gently and firmly correcting poor behavior. It takes maintaining high expectations, teaching and practicing skills, giving serious criticism in private, and motivating from the heart. You can discipline in ways that build your child’s character and self-esteem.

A great Dad supports and respects his child’s mother.

A child can learn to be loving and to accept love by living in a home where both parents are dedicated to keeping their relationship strong. But whether or not it is possible for both parents to live together, you must let your children see that you treat their mother with respect and dignity. Children grow up feeling secure when the two adults most important in their lives treat each other kindly.

A great Dad knows how to be a hero.

Your child wants to grow up to be just like you. A great Dad demonstrates by his actions and his ethics how to become a strong, responsible adult. Life is complicated – and full of risks and temptations for young people today. Children need a strong person, a hero, to show them how to make the right choices and to be the kind of person other people will admire. You are that hero!

A great Dad shares in the lives of his children.

Every fool…can make a baby, but only a man can raise his children. Mario Cuomo, American politician

The guys who fear becoming fathers don’t understand that fathering is not something they express certain traits. A good Dad does, to a certain extent.

All great Dads share the same traits. As Mario Cuomo, American politician, taught me all I needed to know about faith and to be the kind of person other people will admire. You are that hero!

As a great Dad, you must let your children see that you are that hero! You are that hero!

CHECKLIST FOR FATHERS

How are you doing as a Dad? Where are you on the graph of greatness? Here is a checklist to assess where you stand as your family’s hero.

I take time to play and have fun with my family.

I show my children that they are loved for who they are, not just for what they do.

I listen carefully to my children and try to find out what they are really saying.

I get involved in my children’s schooling. I read to them and make time to attend special events.

I share equally in daily chores (cleaning, feeding, caretaking, transportation, etc.)

I correct behavior with restraint, consistency, and fairness.

I contribute to the financial security of the family.

I am dependable. My children can count on me to do what I say I will do.

I am drug and alcohol free so that I am the kind of person I want my children to grow up to be.

I encourage my children to reach for their dreams.

Do you find that you’re doing your best “often”? Great! Your lucky children are probably doing well in life. If you’re mostly a “sometimes” or “seldom” great Dad, it’s time to get back into shape, flex those hero muscles, and move into the “often” category. Your kids count. Most of all, they count on you!
Families come in all sizes and shapes. So do Dads. But no matter what shape, color, or size, **all great Dads share the same traits**. As men define and shape their place in families and in society today, they express certain characteristics of good parenting over and over again.

A great Dad keeps work and family in balance.

A great Dad plays with and helps care for his kids.

A great Dad communicates with his kids.

A great Dad disciplines his kids with fairness.

A great Dad supports and respects his child’s mother.

A great Dad knows how to be a hero!

For more information or assistance in becoming a better Dad, contact any of the following organizations:

**For Counseling and Parenting Classes:**
Parents and Children Together (PACT)
Phone: 847-3285

The Institute for Family Enrichment (TIFE)
Phone: 596-8433

Catholic Services to Families
Phone: 536-1794

Child and Family Services (CFS)
Phone: 521-2377

Family Services Center
Naval Station, Pearl Harbor
Phone: 472-4222

**For Information and Support:**
The Parent Line
Phone: 526-1222

**For Policy Advocacy:**
Hawaii Dads Coalition
Phone: 841-2245