

TOP TEN Tips for Live Away Parents

1. **HANG IN THERE.** Living away from our children is hard. Even though the situation is not ideal, I can remain a positive, important part of my child's life.
2. **FIND SUPPORT.** It's okay to struggle with emotions of anger, hurt, and loneliness at times. I'll learn to develop healthy social and emotional supports from other healthy adults.
3. **RESPECT their world.** Kids often get shifted back and forth in relationships....from one house or visit to the next or from one set of rules to another. I will try to understand this challenge for my child and remember to focus on our relationship.
4. **DO THE BEST I CAN.** I can't control how the other parent raises our child while I'm away. But I can give our child positive choices, be patient and loving, and be there to support our child even with our barriers.
5. **NO MIDDLEMAN....or son....or daughter.** Don't put your kids in the middle of arguments between you and their other parent. I won't talk negatively about their other parent, even if they speak poorly of me. I will resolve the adult conflicts and let our child be a child.
6. **I'M A DIFFERENT PERSON** than their mom/dad is. While we may not always agree, we both have positive qualities to share with our children. I won't confuse my child's actions or feelings for those that may have upset me with their other parent. Mistakes are great teachers, and I'll do what I can to make things better.
7. **GIVE CONSISTENT TIME AND ATTENTION.** My child needs my presence not my presents. I'll give my attention in person, over the phone, through the mail, or any other way.
8. **LISTEN.** Lecturing and arguing get us nowhere. I will listen – even when I feel unappreciated – and accept my child for who they are, not what I want them to be.
9. **FOCUS ON POSITIVE.** Focusing on only the negative is like putting a rock on top of my child's strengths and confidence. They already feel stretched by having his/her parents in two different homes. I will be there to encourage them.
10. **BE A DAD.** I can be a powerful role model in my child's life and show them they can be playful, successful, and treated with respect.