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CLOSE UP: WHEN DAD DOES DOUBLE DUTY

Single fathers are demanding respect

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Build a support system

Single dads raise their children alone, but that doesn't mean they have to feel isolated. Psychologist Richard Warshak suggests these strategies:

- Become active at your kid's school. Get to know the teachers.
- Introduce yourself to the parents of your child's friends. Let them get to know you as a person.
- Seek out a female adult to care for your child from time to time. A kid benefits from a woman's influence.
- Keep the child's mother involved if possible. The more a youngster sees of both parents, the better.
- Keep your sense of humor ready to fend off awkward moments. Take "sexist" comments in good stride.

Most important, Warshak says: "Examine your own attitudes about your role; deal with your doubts. When fathers have confidence in themselves, they naturally