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Both parents are essential

Experts explain why both need to spend equal time with children Dubai

It may seem quite obvious, but health professional emphasise that it is absolutely essential for both parents to be involved in raising their children. Dr Valeria Risoli, a clinical psychologist based in Dubai, reiterates that this is necessary for both boys and girls and a father figure should be present.

She said: "Unfortunately, sometimes both parents cannot be present. In this case, they should try to spend more time with the children on the weekend to recover the time lost and participate in activities that are not possible during the week."

When it comes to the time of birth, Dr Risoli is of the opinion that a father should also get some time off, so they can spend time with his child.

She said: "He proves to be a caring role model. If the father is working and only the mother is home, sometimes there is a biased model or perspective that the father is only a provider."

This means that later in life, a child might think that the father was just providing and not there for play time or other small moments. Therefore, it is essential that even if not for too long, the father participates in daily activities, such as bedtime stories.

This isn't just beneficial for the child's development, but also important for the father. If he is able to spend time with his child, it is mentally fulfilling.

Dr Risoli said: "Sometimes, a father has guilt for not being able to spend too much time with his child and he feels happier if he does. I always say to parents that they shouldn't feel guilty and instead try to do their best during the week. This also helps the mother psychologically, because she can share the love and care with the father."

Dr Shankar Srinivas Kuchibatla, a consultant psychiatrist and medical director based in Dubai, is of the opinion that it becomes very difficult for some fathers to spend time with their children. As a father of two children himself, he believes it is essential for both parents to spend adequate time with their children, especially after the child completes five months.

He said: "This is the time when children are trying to make social contact. They try to see who is an attachment figure, who should they reach out to in an anxious situation. If a stranger comes into the home, they should know who they can bond with."

If this doesn't happen, some attachment issues could arise, as stated by Dr Kuchibatla. The child might develop anxieties towards the father and even see him as a stranger. And a father is more emotional and sensitive to a child's reaction. For people in the UAE who are living away from their families, the issues can be deeper.

He said: "There may be some psychological issues and an adjustment disorder. This is something that is a mixture of anxiety and depressive symptoms. The triggering factors can vary, in this case it could be the distance from family. It will affect their confidence and internal happiness. They could be irritable towards other people and their mood might be affected because they will constantly be thinking about their family."