1. Love her mom. Treat her mother with respect, honor, and a big heaping spoonful of public displays of affection. When she grows up, the odds are good she’ll fall in love with and marry someone who treats her much like you treated her mother. Good or bad, that’s just the way it is. I’d prefer good.

2. Always be there. Quality time doesn’t happen without quantity time. Hang out together for no other reason than just to be in each other’s presence. Be genuinely interested in the things that interest her. She needs her dad to be involved in her life at every stage. Don’t just sit idly by while she add years to her… add life to her years.

3. Save the day. She’ll grow up looking for a hero. It might as well be you. She’ll need you to come through for her over and over again throughout her life. Rise to the occasion. Red cape and blue tights optional.

4. Savor every moment you have together. Today she’s crawling around the house in diapers, tomorrow you’re handing her the keys to the car, and before you know it, you’re walking her down the aisle. Some day soon, hanging out with her old man won’t be the bees knees anymore. Life happens pretty fast. You better cherish it while you can.

5. Pray for her. Regularly. Passionately. Continually.

6. Buy her a glove and teach her to throw a baseball. Make her proud to throw like a girl… a girl with a wicked slider.

7. She will fight with her mother. Choose sides wisely.

8. Go ahead. Buy her those pearls.

9. Of course you look silly playing peek-a-boo. You should play anyway.

10. Enjoy the wonder of bath time.

11. There will come a day when she asks for a puppy. Don’t over think it. At least one time in her life, just say, “Yes.”

12. It’s never too early to start teaching her about money. She will still probably suck you dry as a teenager… and on her wedding day.

13. Make pancakes in the shape of her age for breakfast on her birthday. In a pinch, donuts with pink sprinkles and a candle will suffice.

14. Buy her a pair of Chucks as soon as she starts walking. She won’t always want to wear matching shoes with her old man.

*Photo Credit :: Danielle Rocke Toews*

15. Dance with her. Start when she’s a little girl or even when she’s a baby. Don’t wait ‘til her wedding day.

16. Take her fishing. She will probably squirm more than the worm on your hook. That’s OK.

17. Learn to say no. She may pitch a fit today, but someday you’ll both be glad you stuck to your guns.

18. Tell her she’s beautiful. Say it over and over again. Someday an animated movie or “beauty” magazine will try to convince her otherwise.

19. Teach her to change a flat. A tire without air need not be a major panic inducing event in her life. She’ll still call you crying the first time it happens.

20. Take her camping. Immerse her in the great outdoors. Watch her eyes fill with wonder the first time she sees the beauty of wide open spaces. Leave the iPod at home.

21. Let her hold the wheel. She will always remember when daddy let her drive.

22. She’s as smart as any boy. Make sure she knows that.

23. When she learns to give kisses, she will want to plant them all over your face. Encourage this practice.

24. Knowing how to eat sunflower seeds correctly will not help her get into a good college. Teach her anyway.

25. Letting her ride on your shoulders is pure magic. Do it now while you have a strong back and she’s still tiny.

26. It is in her nature to make music. It’s up to you to introduce her to the joy of socks on a wooden floor.

27. If there’s a splash park near your home, take her there often. She will be drawn to the water like a duck to a puddle.

28. She will eagerly await your return home from work in the evenings. Don’t be late.

29. If her mom enrolls her in swim lessons, make sure you get in the pool too. Don’t be intimidated if there are no other dads there. It’s their loss.

30. Never miss her birthday. In ten years she won’t remember the present you gave her. She will remember if you weren’t there.

31. Teach her to roller skate. Watch her confidence soar.

32. Let her roll around in the grass. It’s good for her soul. It’s not bad for yours either.

33. Take her swimsuit shopping. Don’t be afraid to veto some of her choices, but resist the urge to buy her full-body beach pajamas.

34. Somewhere between the time she turns three and her sixth birthday, the odds are good that she will ask you to marry her. Let her down gently.

35. She’ll probably want to crawl in bed with you after a nightmare. This is a good thing.

36. Few things in life are more comforting to a crying little girl than her father’s hand. Never forget this.

37. Introduce her to the swings at your local park. She’ll squeal for you to push her higher and faster. Her definition of “higher and faster” is probably not the same as yours. Keep that in mind.

38. When she’s a bit older, your definition of higher and faster will be a lot closer to hers. When that day comes, go ahead… give it all you’ve got.

39. Holding her upside down by the legs while she giggles and screams uncontrollably is great for your biceps. WARNING: She has no concept of muscle fatigue.

40. She might ask you to buy her a pony on her birthday. Unless you live on a farm, do not buy her a pony on her birthday. It’s OK to rent one though.

41. Take it easy on the presents for her birthday and Christmas. Instead, give her the gift of experiences you can share together.

42. Let her know she can always come home. No matter what.

43. Remember, just like a butterfly, she too will spread her wings and fly some day. Enjoy her caterpillar years.

44. Write her a handwritten letter every year on her birthday. Give them to her when she goes off to college, becomes a mother herself, or when you think she needs them most.

45. Learn to trust her. Gradually give her more freedom as she gets older. She will rise to the expectations you set for her.

46. When in doubt, trust your heart. She already does.

47. When your teenage daughter is upset, learning when to engage and when to back off will add years to YOUR life. If you succeed in doing this, tell me how.

48. Ice cream covers over a multitude of sins. Know her favorite flavor.

49. This day is coming soon. There’s nothing you can do to be ready for it. The sooner you accept this fact, the easier it will be.

50. Today she’s walking down the driveway to get on the school bus. Tomorrow she’s going off to college. Don’t blink.