



A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Our Children

Children's welfare in monogamous and polygynous families —
love, parenting by age, fairness between children, siblings
across two homes, when parents are in conflict, and a chapter
for teenagers

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ ...

Before we begin

Every decision in a household — who marries whom, how we argue, how we reconcile, how money is spent — is ultimately felt by the children. They are rarely asked, but they are the ones who carry the impact the longest.

This book is for parents in every kind of family: one wife or more, living together or already separated. It compiles evidence on love and justice for the children, guidance on age-appropriate parenting, and practical steps for families whose children grow up in more than one home.

The final chapter is written directly to the teenagers. We encourage you to give this to your child to read on their own, and be prepared to listen to what they wish to say afterwards.

The evidence is quoted from verses and hadith that have been reviewed on the MYPolygyny website. Legal matters such as custody rights and child maintenance are not set out in detail because they depend on circumstances and state law; for certainty, it is best to ask the Syariah Court or your state Islamic religious office.

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Chapters 1–7 are for parents; **Chapter 8 is written directly to teenagers** — give it to them to read. Each chapter ends with a **Summary & reflection** page. Further reference at mypolygyny.com.

01

CHAPTER 1

The Most Precious Trust

We are all guardians, and we will be questioned.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ ...

﴿٦﴾

"O ye who believe! save yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is Men and Stones..."

Surah at-Tahrim 66:6 · tr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali

Children are a Trust

Allah says: "O you who believe! Protect yourselves and your families from a Fire whose fuel is people and stones..." (Surah at-Tahrim 66:6). It starts with oneself, then the family. Parents who guard their prayers, tongue, and character are educating their children even without saying a word.

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Each of you is a shepherd and each of you will be asked about his flock... A man is the shepherd of his family and he will be asked about his flock. A woman is the shepherd in her husband's home and she will be asked about her flock..." (Sahih al-Bukhari 893; Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Imarah). Both mother and father bear this trust—including a father who lives in a different home.

The Prophet ﷺ said that when a person dies, his deeds come to an end except for three, among them "a righteous child who prays for him" (Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Wasiyyah). Raising children is the parents' investment for the Hereafter. It is not measured by academic success alone, but by children who know Allah, have good character, and feel loved.

Four Basic Needs of Every Child



Safety

A home free from violence, threats, and frightening screams.



Love

Affection shown through hugs, words, and time.



Education

Religious and academic knowledge, manners, and role models from parents.



Justice

Being treated fairly with siblings, no matter where they live.

Summary & Reflection

Children are a trust that will be questioned. Both mother and father are guardians, and the safeguarding starts with oneself. A righteous child who prays is the parents' provision for the Hereafter.

Reflection Questions

- What are my children learning from the way I live, rather than from what I say?
- Among the four basic needs, which one is weakest in our home?
- How do I want my children to remember me later?

02

CHAPTER 2

The Affection That Is Shown

Hugs, gentle words, and time.

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا ﴿٧٤﴾

"And those who pray: "Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and our offspring a comfort to our eyes, and make us leaders of those who are mindful of You.""

Surah al-Furqan 25:74

Visible and Felt Love

The Prophet ﷺ kissed his grandson al-Hasan. Al-Aqra' bin Habis said that he had ten children and had never kissed any of them. The Prophet said: "Whoever does not show mercy will not be shown mercy" (Sahih al-Bukhari 5997; Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Fadha'il). The affection that is shown — kissing and hugging one's children — is sunnah.

Anas bin Malik r.a. served the Prophet ﷺ for ten years from childhood, and the Prophet never once said "uff" to him or asked "why did you do this?" (Sahih al-Bukhari 6038; Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Fadha'il). "Indeed, gentleness is not found in anything except that it adorns it, and it is not removed from anything except that it disfigures it" (Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Birr wa as-Silah wa al-Adab).

Discipline is still necessary, but hitting is not the primary way in the sunnah. The Prophet ﷺ never hit anyone with his hand, whether a woman or a servant, except in warfare in the cause of Allah (Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Fadha'il). Anything that harms a child is not nurturing (tarbiyah).

Disciplining Without Hitting or Shouting

1

Clear Rules

Establish a few household rules that the children understand, and explain the reasons behind them.

2

Related Consequences

For example, taking away a gadget if screen time limits are breached — not an unrelated punishment.

3

Praise the Good

Praise good behaviour specifically: "Thank you for sharing with your sibling."

4

Parental Agreement

Neither parent should contradict the other. Discuss it between the two of you first.

5

Self-Care

Do not hit the face, do not hit in anger, and do not humiliate the child. If you often lose your patience, you need rest or support.

Summary & Reflection

The affection that is shown is sunnah, and gentleness adorns everything. Discipline is built with clear rules, related consequences, praise, and example — not hitting and shouting.

Reflection Questions

- When was the last time I hugged every one of my children?
- What are our household rules, and do the children understand the reasons behind them?
- What usually makes me lose my patience, and what can I change?

03

CHAPTER 3

Raising Children According to Age

What children need at every stage.

وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا لَا نَسْأَلُكَ رِزْقًا نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكَ
وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَى ﴿١٣٢﴾

"Enjoin prayer on thy people, and be constant therein. We ask thee not to provide sustenance: We provide it for thee. But the (fruit of) the Hereafter is for righteousness."

Surah Taha 20:132 · tr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali

One Step at a Time

Children are not raised in one way for all ages. In the early stages (0–6 years), the most important things are a sense of safety and love, consistent routines, and knowing Allah through stories, simple prayers, and example. Children learn best by watching.

By the age of seven, prayer (solat) is taught intentionally. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'Teach your child to pray when they are seven' (Sunan at-Tirmidhi 407 — sahih). Allah says: "And enjoin prayer upon your family and be steadfast in it" (Surah Taha 20:132). Raising children requires long patience, not just a single reprimand.

Example is stronger than instruction. Allah says: "Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example" (Surah al-Ahzab 33:21), and warns: "O you who have believed, why do you say that which you do not do?" (Surah as-Saff 61:2). A child who sees their parents praying, speaking gently, and apologizing will imitate all of that.

Needs According to Age

0–6 years

- Hugs, sleep and meal routines
- Stories of the prophets and simple prayers
- Playing with mother and father
- Learning manners: greeting, thank you

7–12 years

- Prayer taught gently and consistently
- Small responsibilities at home
- Praise for effort, not just results
- Limited screen time together

13 years and above

- Being listened to before being advised
- Trust given gradually
- Discussion about boundaries of association
- See Chapter 4 and Chapter 8

Summary & Reflection

Every age has its needs: safety and example in early years, prayer taught with patience from age seven, and more listening guidance in adolescence. The example of the parents is the strongest lesson.

Reflection Questions

- What stage are my children at now, and what is their primary need?
- Am I teaching prayer with patience, or with anger?
- What is one habit of mine that I do not want my child to imitate?

04

CHAPTER 4

Adolescents: Guiding, Not Controlling

Relationship first, rules later.

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَنُ لِابْنِهِ ۖ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ ۚ يَبْنِىْ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللّٰهِ ۚ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾

"Behold, Luqman said to his son by way of instruction: "O my son! join not in worship (others) with Allah: for false worship is indeed the highest wrongdoing."

Surah Luqman 31:13 · tr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali

Luqman and his son

The Qur'an records Luqman's advice to his son concerning tawhid (the oneness of God), prayer, enjoining good, patience, not being arrogant, and lowering the voice (Surah Luqman 31:13–19) — a complete curriculum of manners. Notice the tone: "O my son." The advice comes from love, not from authority.

Adolescents are building themselves. They need to be heard before they are advised, given trust little by little, and respected as individuals. The Prophet ﷺ said: "He is not one of us who does not show mercy to the young and does not respect the old" (Jami' at-Tirmidhi 1919).

The world of today's youth is largely on screens. Teach principles, not just prohibitions: "A Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand other Muslims are safe." (Sahih al-Bukhari 10). Typing is the work of the hand, and sending is the work of the tongue. And "...indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart – all of these will be questioned." (Surah al-Isra' 17:36).

Five ways to talk with adolescents

1

Choose a relaxed time

In the car, while eating, or walking. Serious conversations don't necessarily need to happen in a closed room.

2

Listen until the end

Don't interrupt to advise. Ask: "And then what happened?"

3

Acknowledge feelings

"Dad understands you are angry." Acknowledging does not mean agreeing.

4

Discuss rules together

Rules that are agreed upon are easier to follow than rules that are forced.

5

The door is always open

Make sure your child knows they can come to you even after making a mistake.

Summary & Reflection

Adolescents are guided with connection, not control — like Luqman advising with "O my son." Listen, respect, give gradual trust, and teach digital manners with principles.

Reflection Questions

- When was the last time I listened to my adolescent child without advising?
- Does my child feel safe telling me about their mistakes?
- Which rules should we discuss and revisit together?

05

CHAPTER 5

Being Fair to Children

Every child, in every home.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلّٰهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ﴾

﴿١٣٥﴾ ...

"O ye who believe! stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves..."

Surah an-Nisa' 4:135 · tr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali

Be God-Conscious and Just

An-Nu'man bin Bashir r.a. narrated that his father wanted to give him a gift and asked the Prophet ﷺ to witness it. The Prophet ﷺ asked whether he had given the same to all his children. When he said no, he said: "Fear Allah and be fair between your children". His father then took back the gift (Sahih al-Bukhari 2587; Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Hibat).

Child maintenance (nafkah) is the father's obligation. Allah says: "And the obligation of the father is to feed and clothe the mothers in a proper manner" (Surah al-Baqarah 2:233). The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said to Hindun binti 'Utbah: "Take what is sufficient for you and your child in a proper manner" (Sahih al-Bukhari 5364; Sahih Muslim, Kitab al-Aqdhiyah). Child maintenance does not lapse because of tension in the relationship between the father and their mother.

In a family with more than one home, this test is heavier because a father's affection tends to lean towards the child in the home where he is most frequently present. Turns (giliran) are the wife's right; the children in the other home still need their father every week. Child maintenance amounts vary with the father's means and the child's needs; if in doubt, the Syariah Court or the state Islamic religious office can help.

A Father's Acts of Justice

- ✓ Allocating for each child according to their actual needs — the principle is the same, even if the amount is not necessarily equal.
- ✓ An education fund for every child, not just for the child in a specific home.
- ✓ Being present for the child's affairs during the day, even on another wife's turn (giliran), without lingering.
- ✓ Video calls to the child who is not with the father that night.
- ✓ One-on-one time with every child, for example, a monthly breakfast.
- ✓ Recording every child's major exams, birthdays, and Quran completion date in the father's calendar.

Summary & Reflection

Justice among children is the command of the Prophet ﷺ: in gifts, attention, and maintenance. In a family with more than one home, the father needs to plan his presence for every child, because turns (giliran) are the wife's right, not a measure of affection for the child.

Reflection Questions

- If my children were asked, would they feel I am just?
- Which child receives the least one-on-one time with me?
- Are there any gifts I need to balance out?

06

CHAPTER 6

Siblings in Two Homes

Paternal half-siblings remain siblings.

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ^ج وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

﴿١٠﴾

"The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah, that ye may receive Mercy."

Surah al-Hujurat 49:10 · tr. Abdullah Yusuf Ali

The Bonds That Need Maintaining

Children of different wives are paternal half-siblings. They are mahram to one another, and must maintain the ties of kinship. A mother must not plant hatred towards paternal half-siblings. Doing so severs the ties of kinship that Allah has commanded to be maintained (Surah Muhammad 47:22–23).

A child will learn about their father's other family sooner or later, and it is better that they hear it from their own parents than from friends or social media. The father should be the one to tell them, ideally together with the mother if she is able. Young children only need to know the basics: "Dad has another family too, and Dad is still your father." Adolescents require a more honest explanation and space to feel angry. Emphasise what does not change: love, maintenance (nafkah), home, and school.

Fights between siblings are common. Allah commands that those who are believers and are in dispute should be reconciled justly, for verily, the believers are brothers (al-Hujurat 49:9–10). The story of Prophet Joseph (Yusuf) shows that sibling jealousy can escalate if left unchecked, but it can also end in forgiveness (Yusuf 12:92).

Building Paternal Sibling Bonds

1

Speak Well

Talk about the older brother, sister, and siblings in the other home using their names and good qualities.

2

Joint Gatherings

Hari Raya, birthdays and family gatherings planned in advance, if everyone is comfortable.

3

Do Not Compare

Do not say, "The child in that house is smarter"—comparison breeds jealousy.

4

Maintain Boundaries

After puberty, pay attention to the 'awrah' (parts of the body that must be covered) and interactions between stepchildren and co-wives' children who are not mahram.

5

Reconcile with Justice

Listen to both sides before judging; teach them to express their feelings with words.

Summary & Reflection

Children from different mothers are paternal half-siblings whose ties of kinship must be maintained. Inform them about the family honestly and according to their age, do not sow hatred, and reconcile disputes justly.

Reflection Questions

- What does my child know about their paternal half-siblings, and from whom do they know this?
- Have I ever, unconsciously, compared the children in different homes?
- What is one opportunity for our children to meet comfortably this year?

07

CHAPTER 7

When Parents Are in Conflict or Separated

Protect children from the war of adults.

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ... ﴿٢٨٦﴾

"Allah does not burden a soul beyond what it can bear..."

Surah al-Baqarah 2:286

Children are not weapons

When parents quarrel or separate, children often get caught in the middle. They are used as messengers, questioned about the other household, or overhear one parent speaking ill of the other. Do not use children as messengers or spies between households, and do not blame anyone in front of the children, whether it is a mother, father, co-wife, or the co-wife's children.

A child does not bear the sins of their parents. They remain children pure from their parents' sins—they should not be insulted or discriminated against: "no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another" (Surah al-An'am 6:164).

Custody (hadhanah), visitation, and maintenance (nafkah) after separation are determined by each family's circumstances and state law, so there is no single answer for everyone. The Syariah Court or the state Islamic religious office can explain where you stand, while counselling services and Sulh officers help parents reach an agreement that puts the child first. If a child is in danger—beaten, threatened, or neglected—call 999 or Talian Kasih 15999.

Protecting children during conflict

Do

- ✓ Emphasise that this is not the child's fault
- ✓ Maintain school, meal, and sleep routines
- ✓ Allow the child to love both parents
- ✓ Clear agreement on visits and maintenance (nafkah)
- ✓ School counsellor or professional if the child is distressed

Avoid

- ✗ Arguing in front of the child
- ✗ Asking the child to choose sides
- ✗ Asking the child about the other household
- ✗ Restricting the child from either parent without safety reasons
- ✗ Using maintenance (nafkah) or visits as a threat

Summary & Reflection

In conflict and separation, the child must be protected: not an emissary, not a spy, and not a party forced to choose sides. For custody and maintenance (nafkah), the Syariah Court can give guidance suited to your situation, and the child's safety is always paramount.

Reflection Questions

-
- Has my child ever heard me speaking ill of their mother or father?
-
- What routines can I maintain so that the child feels safe?
-
- Does my child have someone they can talk to about their feelings?

08

CHAPTER 8

For You, Teenagers

This chapter is written for you, the young ones.

وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي
صَغِيرًا ﴿٢٤﴾

"And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! bestow on them thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood.'"

Surah al-Isra' 17:24

To the reader

If your home feels heavy — if your father has another family, if your parents always argue, or if they have already separated — your feelings are valid. You can feel angry, sad, ashamed, or confused. None of this makes you a bad child. And what happens between your parents **is not your fault**.

You can love both your mother and father, and also love your siblings in another home. You do not have to choose sides, and you do not have to be a messenger between homes. If asked, you can politely say: "I don't want to get involved. Please ask Dad (or Mum) yourself."

Islam asks us to be good and humble to our parents, and to pray for them: "My Lord, have mercy upon them both as they brought me up when I was small" (Surah al-Isra' 17:24). Being good does not mean you have to endure danger. If you are hit, threatened, or unsafe at home, tell an adult you trust, or call Talian Kasih 15999. In an emergency, call 999.

When home feels heavy

1

Name the feeling

Write in a diary or tell yourself: "I feel sad / angry because..."

2

Find an adult

A teacher, school counsellor, grandparent, aunt, or uncle you trust.

3

Maintain routine

Pray, get enough sleep, exercise, and good friends help keep the mind calm.

4

Be careful with screens

Do not vent family problems on social media. It is hard to delete and can hurt everyone.

5

Seek help

Talian Kasih 15999 (24 hours). Talian HEAL 15555 for emotional support. In danger: 999.

Summary & Reflection

Your feelings are valid, and your parents' problems are not your fault. You can love all family members without choosing sides. Being good to your parents does not mean enduring danger — find a trusted adult and ask for help.

Reflection Questions

- Who is one adult I trust to talk to?
- What helps me feel calm when home feels heavy?
- What prayer do I want to make for my mother, father, and family?

Child Welfare Checklist

For every child, in every home. Tick what has been done.

Item	Who	Chapter
☐ Daily hugs and words of affection	Parents	2
☐ Small, clear, and explained household rules	Parents	2
☐ Starting to teach prayer gently at age seven	Parents	3
☐ One-on-one time with each child at least once a month	Father and mother	4
☐ Fair giving and attention among all children	Father	5
☐ Maintenance and education fund for each child in every home	Father	5
☐ Father's important date for each child in the calendar	Father	5
☐ Children are not used as messengers or spies between homes	Parents	6, 7
☐ No bad words about the mother, father, or co-wife in front of the children	Parents	7
☐ Children know which adult to contact if they are in distress	Parents	8

Getting help



In danger right now?

Call the Police on 999. Your safety and your children's comes first; everything else can follow.



Talian Kasih 15999 (24 hours)

For urgent cases involving the safety or welfare of a family. Talian HEAL 15555 and Befrienders KL 03-7627 2929 for emotional support.



Family Counselling Unit, state JAIN

Every state Islamic Religious Department has a family counselling unit, and it is free. There is no need to wait until a problem grows — coming early is welcome.



Sulh Officer, Syariah Court

Mediation before a full hearing, also free. Rights, procedures and rules can differ from state to state; the Syariah Court or the state Islamic religious office can explain what applies in your situation.

CLOSING

A Sight of Comfort

Children do not need perfect parents. They need parents who are present, fair, gentle, and willing to apologise when they make mistakes.

May Allah make our children a sight of comfort, and may He make us the parents they pray for with deep love when we are gone.

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لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا ﴿٧٤﴾

"And those who pray: "Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and our offspring a comfort to our eyes, and make us leaders of those who are mindful of You.""

Surah al-Furqan 25:74

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