

IDAHO DADS MATTER!

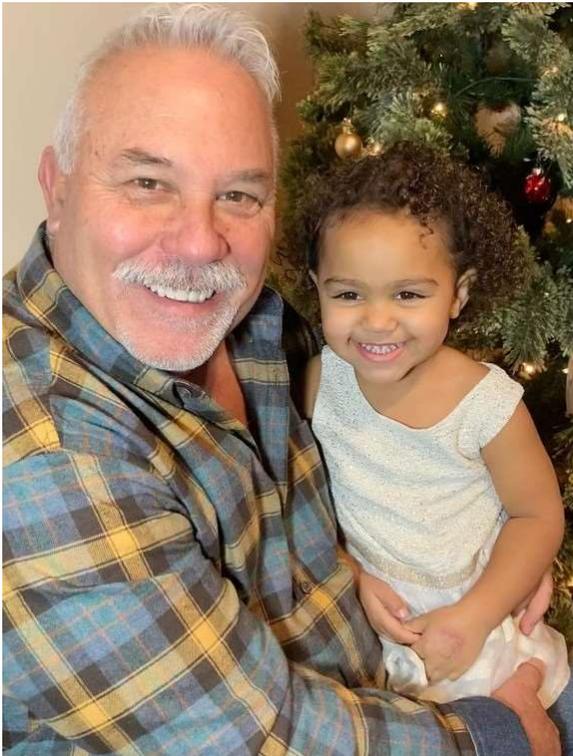
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The Understanding Dad

...He Gets Worn Down, but He Rallies for More!

POST FALLS—James (Jay) Aragon says children need love, understanding, patience, and boundaries. The father of adult daughters Holly and Katie—and the grandfather of Holly’s two-year-old daughter, Arielle—says he and Sally Aragon (grandma) brace for action whenever Arielle comes over.



“She likes jumping on the bed and doing flips,” Jay explained. “As soon as I flip her over, she yells ‘do it again, do it again!’ She’s like a little gymnast; she likes to jump around and flip around on the bed and the trampoline. ‘Only jump in the center and not on the edges because I don’t want you flying off the side,’ I tell her.”

Puzzles, Books, and Applesauce

Jay reads to Arielle often. “We do books and puzzles whenever she’s here, and I show her things on my computer—educational things for her. I feed her throughout the day—waffles and applesauce, cheese sticks, vegetables—we try to change it up for her. I’m a dad all over again when Arielle is here,” he said, noting she appears at the house when her mom is working and when Arielle isn’t learning and having fun at Nurturing Nest Daycare in Post Falls. “Sometimes it gets overwhelming. Sometimes my wife and I are like,

‘give us a break!’ because it’s a lot of work taking care of a two-year-old child. We’ve already done this before (being parents), and we sometimes feel like we need our space. We try to help out, and I try to be patient. But then five minutes after Holly leaves with Arielle we miss them and if we don’t see Arielle for a couple days, we call Holly and say, ‘where’s our granddaughter?!’ and we ask Holly to bring her over,” he said with a chuckle, adding, “Grandchildren are the greatest thing in the world, but they do wear you down and you do need a breather.”

Dinner, Desperation, and Laughter

My wife and I fill in as needed, like this morning Holly and Arielle woke up here at grandma and grandpa’s house because that way Holly could go to work early at the hospital and Arielle could wake up with us,” he said.

“There’s times when I come home from work and start cooking dinner and I discover or recall that I need to watch Arielle, but I’m tired from my day. Arielle doesn’t understand that I’m tired—that my wife and I are tired—and she can get really busy really quickly. There are times you’re just like, ‘Oh, please. Holly, when are you getting home from work?’ Then all of the sudden she does something and you just start laughing,” he explained, “and then no matter how tired you were, you’re back in the game.”

Still, he’s glad Holly is a dedicated parent who eventually takes their granddaughter home. “She’s a great mother. She’s taught me a ton about how to parent her daughter, and I’m still learning,” he said,

Asked what he believes are the most important aspects of parenting, Jay Aragon said this: “Give them all the love and understanding you can, let them know you’re there for them. Educate them; you’re teaching all the time. Get puzzles out, get the computer out, don’t lock them in front of the TV and just walk away. Show them you’ll always be there for them. Teach them right from wrong and the good values in life,” he said.

“Patience is huge. Young children are a lot of work, and there’s going to be times where you need to remember to be patient. Set boundaries and keep the boundaries you set. I have to be very consistent. When I say ‘No,’ it means ‘No,’ even when I want to give in. I stay consistent for the most part,” he said.

Asked to compare the father he was when Holly and Katie were young, versus the grandparent he is today, Jay Aragon said with a chuckle, “I like to think that I’m getting better.”

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—Jay Aragon