



# FATHER'S SURVIVAL KIT

## 7 Essential Tools for Raising a Child with Disabilities

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Got4titude. A community built by fathers, for fathers.

**GOT4TITUDE**

# 1. THE INVISIBLE LOAD CHECKLIST



**You're carrying more than anyone sees. Here's what that might include:**

- Financial stress from medical bills and therapies
- Unspoken grief from dreams that had to shift
- The pressure to be “the strong one”
- Marriage or relationship strain
- Guilt when you feel like you’re not doing enough
- Exhaustion from holding it all together

You’re not failing. You’re carrying a load no one prepared you for.

Start by naming what you’re carrying so it doesn’t silently crush you.

 **Tip:** Take 2 minutes and jot down your “invisible load” list.

 **Benefit:** Clarity brings relief—and helps you ask for the support you actually need.

… **Real Talk:** I didn’t realize how much I was carrying until my health and marriage started slipping and my patience wore thin. Letting go of control and leaning on a greater consciousness, something bigger than me, was the turning point. That’s when things started to shift.

## 2. THE EMOTIONAL FIRST AID KIT



**There are days it's all too much.**

**Here's how to stay present without checking out:**

- Anger? Go outside. Move your body. Say out loud: "This isn't my fault, but I get to lead through it."
- Guilt? Write down 3 things you did for your child today.

**Overwhelm? Text one friend:** "Today's rough. No advice needed. Just needed to say it."

You don't need to fix everything. You just need to stay connected to yourself.



 **Tip:** Save these in your notes app so you can access them when it hits.

 **Benefit:** Reduces emotional spirals and helps you stay steady when your child needs you most.

# 3. THE MENTAL REBOOT ROUTINE

(5 MIN DAILY)



**When everything feels like too much, do this:**

1. Sit with your feet on the floor.
2. Take 5 deep breaths. In and out your nose.
3. Put your hand on your chest.
4. Say: “I’m safe. I’m strong. I’m doing my best.”
5. Name one thing you’re grateful for — even if it’s just coffee.

 **Tip:** Use this as your morning or lunch reset routine at the same time every day.

 **Benefit:** Calms your nervous system so you respond instead of react.

# 4. MICRO-MOMENTS OF CONNECTION



**You don't need hours. You need intentional minutes.**

- Lay on the floor next to your child. Match their energy.
- Sing a silly song you used to love. Let them hear your joy.
- Say what you imagine they're thinking. It shows you're paying attention.
- Let them see you cry, laugh, or breathe. They feel your energy more than your words.

 **Tip:** Schedule 5 “micro-moments” this week. Set an alarm if you need to.

 **Benefit:** These mini-bonds build long-term connection, even if your child is nonverbal or sensory-averse.





## 5. MARRIAGE & FATHERHOOD

### Mini-Map

**This journey changes everything, including your relationship.**

Here's one truth I wish I knew sooner:

You can't wait for life to calm down to reconnect. You have to do it in the chaos.

#### **Quick resets that help:**

- 10-minute check-ins after the kids go down
- Weekly “no kid talk” coffee dates...even if it’s just on the porch or kitchen table
- Leaving sticky notes or texts that say, “I still see you.”

**Real Talk:** My wife and I do Friday night date nights at home after the kids go to bed. Sometimes we cook together and talk. Sometimes we get takeout, pour a glass of wine, and just reconnect. It’s not fancy. It’s intentional and that’s what matters.

**Tip:** Add your next at-home date night to the calendar right now.

**Benefit:** Staying connected to your partner helps you lead your family as a team, not just two exhausted individuals.

# 6. THE ADVOCACY SCRIPT



**Feel overwhelmed during IEPs, evaluations, or doctor visits? Use these plug-and-play phrases to sound confident and prepared:**

- “Can you explain that in plain language so I can make the best decision for my child?”
- “What goals are realistic and meaningful for my child, not just the standard benchmarks?”
- “I’d like to bring in outside resources to support this plan. How can we integrate that?”

 **Bonus:** Bring a notebook and write everything down. It shifts the power dynamic.

 **Want more IEP support?**

Download our free IEP Guide & Checklist to walk into your next meeting with confidence.

[DOWNLOAD NOW](#)



 **Tip:** Read these aloud before meetings to get grounded.

 **Benefit:** You’ll sound clear, calm, and confident even if you don’t feel that way yet.

# 7. THE BROTHERHOOD LIST



## You're not supposed to do this alone.

Pick one lane this week. One online space, one audio resource, or one local connection. Consistency beats variety. Here are communities where you'll find other fathers who get it:

- **Got4titude Private Facebook Group**: The brotherhood built for you
- **Reddit:** [r/Daddit](https://www.reddit.com/r/Daddit) | [r/Autism Parents](https://www.reddit.com/r/Autism_Parents)
- **Podcasts:** [Special Fathers Network-Dad to Dad Podcast](https://www.specialfathersnetwork.com/podcast)
- **Instagram:** Follow [@Got4titude for daily support, tools, and encouragement](https://www.instagram.com/got4titude)

 **Tip:** Join 1 group this week and post something real, even just a “Hey, I’m new here.”

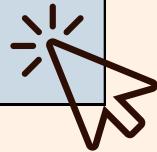
 **Benefit:** Knowing you’re not the only one carrying this gives you strength you didn’t know you had.

 **Real Talk:** Isolation didn’t make me stronger. It made everything heavier. Brotherhood didn’t fix my problems. It gave me strength, clarity, and a place to breathe.

# WANT MORE TOOLS, MINDSET SHIFTS, AND BROTHERHOOD?

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Support isn't weakness.  
It's strategy.

