

PARENTING: BEING A SINGLE PARENT

by:

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Parenting is a difficult and rewarding process that calls for commitment, tolerance, and love. The difficulties can, however, multiply when one assumes the role of a single parent. Being a single parent is taking on all the duties associated with raising a child by yourself, without the help or support of a partner.

According to RA 11861 or the Expanded Solo Parent's Welfare Act which repealed RA 8972 and a new provision is inserted and they are as follows:

- a. A parent who provides sole parental care and support of the child/ren due to –
1. Birth as a result of rape, even in the absence of a conviction; provided, however, that the mother is responsible for providing the child(ren)'s sole care and support; provided further, that the solo parent under this category may nevertheless be regarded as a solo parent under any of the categories in this section;
 2. Death of the spouse;
 3. Detention of the spouse for at least three months or service of sentence for a criminal conviction;
 4. Physical/mental incapacity of the spouse as certified by a public/private medical practitioner;
 5. Legal separation for at least six months, and the solo parent is entrusted with the sole parental care and support of the child/ren;

6. Declaration of nullity marriage, as decreed by a court recognized by law, or due to divorce, subject to existing laws, and the solo parent is entrusted with the sole parental care and support of the child/ren; or

7. Abandonment by the spouse for at least six months.

b. Provided, furthermore, that the OFW, his/her spouse, family member, or guardian of the child/ren of an OFW falls under the requirements of this section; and Provided, furthermore, that the said OFW belongs to the low/semi-skilled worker category and is away from the Philippines for an uninterrupted period of twelve months;

c. Unmarried mother/father who keeps and rears the child/ren;

d. Any legal guardian, adoptive or foster parent who solely provides parental care and support to a child/ren;

e. Any relative within the fourth civil degree of consanguinity or affinity of the parent or legal guardian who assumes parental care and support of the child or children as a result of the death, abandonment, disappearance, or absence of the parents or solo parent for at least six months: Provided, That in cases of solo grandparents who are elderly but who have the sole parental care and support over their grandchildren who are unmarried, unemployed, and twenty-two years old.; or

f. A pregnant woman who provides sole parental care and support to the unborn child/ren.”

According to this Act, if a parent's status or circumstances change to the point where they are no longer left to handle parenthood alone, their benefits are void. Only a solo parent who is exercising sole parental responsibility for raising the child or children is eligible to receive benefits under this Act; however, a solo parent will not lose that status if the other parent offers sporadic help and/or seasonal gifts that do not satisfy the legal

standard of support under The Family Code of the Philippines; and the absence of a valid and legal marriage between the child's mother and father.

Balancing job and family life is one of the biggest difficulties single parents encounter. They frequently find themselves juggling many duties and obligations at once since they have no one to share the burden with. They must act as their children's mother and father, offering them moral support, instruction, and discipline. Along with the rights to leave provided by existing laws, any employee who is a single parent and has worked for at least six months, regardless of employment status, is entitled to a forfeitable, noncumulative parental leave of up to seven working days with pay each year. In this scenario, solo parents may then have quality time to their child/ren.

Financial strain is another common issue faced by single parents. Without dual incomes or shared expenses, they often struggle to make ends meet. This can lead to increased stress levels as they try to provide for their children's basic needs while also ensuring their overall well-being. Under RA 11861 a solo parent is entitled to additional benefits to ease their financial burden. One of these many benefits is means-, pension-, and subsidy-tested monthly cash subsidy of One thousand pesos per month per solo parent who is earning a minimum wage and below. To avail of the additional benefits under this section, the solo parent shall present a Solo Parent Identification Card that in availing the additional benefits, the solo parent booklet shall also be presented.

Being a single parent may be immensely gratifying despite these difficulties. As they go through life together, children of single parents form close relationships with them. As adolescents solve challenges on their own, they get important insights into resiliency and determination. Undoubtedly challenging, single parenting presents an opportunity for personal development and strength-building. Although it demands a great deal of commitment and sacrifice, the rewards are enormous. Single parents deserve praise for their unwavering dedication to provide their children love and care despite encountering many difficulties along the way.

References:

R.A. 8972 (lawphil.net)

20220604-RA-11861-RRD.pdf (officialgazette.gov.ph)

Republic Act No. 11861 (lawphil.net)