



# Being a dad

You can interact well with your child when you do a little bit more than caring for them.

There are many different ways to make special time with your child.

## Things all dads can do

### Talk to your children.

Tell them stories and jokes, and share your feelings. Listening to you talk helps them to learn and brings you closer.

### Read aloud.

This is a good way to spend time together that promotes language, literacy and brain development.

### Explain things.

Point out things worth noticing and explain how they work. This promotes brain development.

### Spend time listening.

When you stop what you're doing and give your child your full attention, you create a golden moment, and boost their development and self-esteem.

### Be a good role model.

Your child learns how to relate to others through their interactions with you. Even saying 'no' and 'don't' can be learning moments, as are the times you praise your child for politeness and cooperation. This gives them an example to follow.

### Create challenging learning opportunities.

Work out how to keep a game within your child's ability – not too hard, not too easy.

### Offer choices when you can.

A choice is a good alternative to an instruction and helps build independence, encourages responsibility and gives your child some control in decision making. For example, ask, 'Do you want to put on your green or your red t-shirt today?'

## Use your sense of humour when you're reading or explaining things.

It can help your child's wellbeing as they grow.

### Get into some rough-and-tumble play.

This 'dad speciality' gives your children the chance to get some exercise. It also lets them safely test their physical capabilities and limits, and helps them to learn how to manage emotions like anger, excitement and the desire to win. Remember to:

- time play wisely – it will take time to wind down afterwards so before bed may not be ideal
- set a few ground rules – for example, when someone says they've had enough, it's time to take a break
- when a bump or collision happens, calm things down, make sure your child understands it was an accident and start again when the tears are dry
- encourage your child to keep trying when they 'lose'
- be prepared to let yourself be overpowered or caught sometimes so your child can 'win'.

## New dads

You might feel overwhelmed at first but new dads are just as good as new mums at recognising and responding to the needs of newborns. So get involved and try your hand at everything.

- Dressing, settling, bathing and nappy changing one-on-one with your baby are all ways to bond.
- Show your affection and respond to baby's cues; it will make baby feel good and stimulate brain development.
- Talk to baby while you're doing things together and use a warm, sing-song voice; it helps baby to feel content and protected.



- Make time for play. Tummy time helps muscle and brain development. Different sights and sounds will build baby's skills. Word rhymes and stories build language and memory.

## Separated dads

Separated fathers can help their child feel safe and secure through their interactions and by staying involved.

- Keep in touch with your child's life through phone calls and messages, and by attending school and sporting events.
- Be reliable around pick-ups and drop-offs.
- Make your home their home by giving your child somewhere to call their own, for example their own room or cupboard for their clothes.
- Ensure your children feel comfortable if they choose to stay with their mother or at a friend's house instead of staying with you during your access time.
- You can have different rules and ways of doing things at your house. You can make your own rituals and routines to provide your child with structure and stability.

## More information

The Queensland Government provides families with up-to-date information about approved early childhood education and care services in their local area, and has parent tip sheets on a range of topics.

To access the latest information or to find an early childhood education and care service call 13 QGOV\* (13 74 68) or visit [www.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au](http://www.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au).

For service ratings visit the MyChild website at [www.mychild.gov.au](http://www.mychild.gov.au) or the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website at [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au).

### Other languages

If you need an interpreter, phone 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

### Assistance making a call

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment:

- TTY users phone 133 677\*, then ask for 13 74 68\*.
- Speak-and-listen users should phone 1300 555 727\*, then ask for 13 74 68\*
- Internet relay users should connect to the National Relay Service at [www.iprelay.com.au/call/index.aspx](http://www.iprelay.com.au/call/index.aspx) then ask for 13 74 68\*.

### Acknowledgement

The information in this publication was sourced from the Raising Children Network at [www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

### Disclaimer

This publication is offered as a guide and should not be considered an exhaustive statement on the subject.

\*Calls from mobile phones are charged at applicable rates.