

## Suggestions for families and staff

### Suggestions for dads

- ▶ Chat to your newborn about what you are doing. Your baby will love hearing your voice, even if they cannot understand words yet.
- ▶ Ask your child what they have been up to and talk to them about your day and their day.
- ▶ Play with and read to your child.
- ▶ Spend one-on-one time with your child.
- ▶ Visit the early childhood service your child attends and get to know the staff there (e.g., if you are picking up or dropping off your child ask them to show you their room, toys or drawings).
- ▶ Share information with early childhood staff, such as developmental milestones or any changes in behaviour you have noticed in your child. Let staff know the best way to communicate with you, and the times you are available.
- ▶ Talk to your child about how you feel, so that your child learns about expression of emotions.



### Suggestions for families and partners of fathers

- ▶ Encourage play time and one-on-one time between fathers and children.
- ▶ If dads work long hours or work away from home, update them on service events and their child's progress.
- ▶ Try to encourage dads to get involved in the everyday care of their baby, such as changing nappies, bath times, feeding and rocking their baby to sleep.
- ▶ Share any parenting or caregiving tips you learn from reading or attending parenting groups.
- ▶ Make a specific effort to invite dads to parenting events or early childhood service events.
- ▶ Going for family walks or spending time together during everyday family routines can be one way to look after yourselves and become involved with your children.



## Suggestions for staff

- ▶ Reflect and observe how much or often you currently involve fathers in your service (e.g., Is most of your contact with mums or other family members? Do you know the names of dads of the children at your service?).
- ▶ Document current father involvement and consider planning some father-friendly activities (e.g., offer dads' events like breakfasts, suppers, working bees, or movie nights, at times that suit fathers) and consider involving fathers in the planning of your service programs and policies or starting a dads' group.
- ▶ Provide a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere at your service including newsletters, pamphlets, and posters which recognise the positive role fathers have with children. You could also encourage dads to borrow materials such as library books.
- ▶ Avoid asking dads to communicate information to their partners. Fathers want to be informed about their child's day and valued as a primary carer in their child's life.
- ▶ Record father involvement; be aware and take note of how often your staff and service interact with fathers.
- ▶ Check you have contact details for both parents or carers and balance communication between mums and dads (e.g., address letters or correspondence to both parents or carers).
- ▶ Consider family situations when sharing progress information such as written feedback and portfolios. For example, it may help to prepare two copies, one for each parent, if parents are not together.
- ▶ Have pictures of fathers and children around the service, this will help children feel happy to see the picture, and dads to feel comfortable when they come to the service.
- ▶ Tell dads you appreciate their involvement; this will make them feel included and proud, and make it more likely they will continue their involvement.



This resource and further information on the national KidsMatter Early Childhood initiative is available to download at [www.kidsmatter.edu.au](http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au). The KidsMatter Early Childhood team also welcomes your feedback which can be submitted through the website.



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