

# Being a dad

**Dads are very important in children's lives. When dads spend time talking and playing with children it benefits everyone in the family.**

## ParentLink

informing



supporting



connecting



### However you were brought up, you can be the kind of dad you want to be for your children

### Roles that dads can play with their children

When you are a dad, the most important thing you can give children is your love.

- Be involved and spend time with children.
- Show you are proud of them.
- Encourage children to aim high in life.
- Help them have a strong Aboriginal identity and learn about culture.

Aboriginal men have an important role to play in shaping future generations.

Children benefit when dads:

- care for babies right from the start
- have fun and play with children — they will love it!
- share books and help children to learn
- are involved with school, activities and sports
- are there for children as they grow up.

A hug from dad is special!

Please note: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this website may contain images, voices or names of deceased persons in photographs, film, audio recordings or printed material.



**ACT**  
Government

AN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARENTLINK GUIDE

[www.parentlink.act.gov.au](http://www.parentlink.act.gov.au)

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This guide's content was produced by Parenting SA, Women's and Children's Health Network.

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## Looking for more information?

ACT Government Publication No. 17/0604 (June 2017)

## There are lots of ways to be a dad

Dads can live with their children, or be away for many reasons. If you are away, you could:

- phone or visit as much as you can
- remember special occasions such as birthdays.

If you are separated from your child's mum, it is best for everyone if you get along — this isn't always easy. Try to:

- talk kindly to mum and other family members
- put children's needs first — work out what is best for them
- stay calm — it upsets children to see you angry. Remember children learn from what you do.

Dads can show their sons what it means to be a man, and show daughters how women should be treated.

## Children need to know that you love them, even if you can't be there

If you have been away from children, you might worry about connecting again. It's never too late to try — even if it's hard. Take small steps and be patient. Get some support if you need it.

It's never too late to make positive changes in life.

## If there are problems in your life

Sometimes it's harder to be a dad if there are problems in your life. There might be things from the past, or problems with health, alcohol, drugs, or the law. Whatever's going on, you can still be a good dad.

- Let children know you love them. Be caring and reliable.
- Start dealing with problems — even small steps can make a big difference.
- Talk with trusted friends or family — especially if you feel low.
- Join a men's group — talk with other dads.
- Find services that can help. Aboriginal health services are a good place to start.
- Do things you enjoy — connect with culture. Feel good about yourself.
- See a doctor and take their advice. Limit or quit alcohol and smoking. Don't take drugs. Try to eat well and be active.
- Getting help when you need it is part of being a good dad.

Looking after yourself gives you more energy for being a dad!



ParentLink — for other parenting guides, online parenting information [www.parentlink.act.gov.au](http://www.parentlink.act.gov.au)

Child and Family Centres — for parenting information and support  
[www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/childandfamilycentres](http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/childandfamilycentres)

Raising Children's Network — covering topics for parenting newborns to teens <http://raisingchildren.net.au>

Gugan Gulwan Youth Aboriginal Corporation t 6296 8900 [www.gugan-gulwan.com.au](http://www.gugan-gulwan.com.au)

Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service t 6284 6222 [www.winnunga.org.au](http://www.winnunga.org.au)

Relationships Australia Dhunlung Yarra Service is dedicated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples t 6122 7100 [www.racr.relationships.org.au](http://www.racr.relationships.org.au)