

Dads make a difference

5-8
Years

Children at school also learn at home - you are an important teacher! Build a strong and caring relationship with your child by spending time together. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- give your child lots of praise – this will help them feel good about themselves and build up their confidence.
- help them make friends by making time for your child to play with others or by giving a team sport or activity a go. Go along to sports days and school concerts whenever you can.
- show them how to be with others by being a good role model. Children learn the most about how to be with others by watching you.
- teach them about asking questions, taking turns, and good listening – the skills they need to get along with others. Smiling can help make friends, encourage your child to smile when they say hello!
- talk about feelings and different points of view – this will help them to deal with arguments.

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Build their independence and confidence. Really listen and take them seriously – even if your answer is “no” you might say “let me think about that”. Let them make some of their own decisions.

- talk together about how to handle tough situations at school and with friends. Teach your child that teasing and bullying get in the way of making friends.

Reading together

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Now that your child has started school they are probably spending lots of time learning to read. You can make a real difference to your child's reading skills and confidence by:

- reading to your child every day – even if it's just for a few minutes.
- allowing your child to choose the books they like to read and helping them to find books they are interested in.
- your child will have 'readers' from school. Find time each day to listen to your child read out loud their readers.
- talk to your child's teacher about how to use the 'readers' and give lots of praise to encourage your child's reading skills.
- talk about the story, sound out words together, don't rush reading time.
- helping your child choose books they can enjoy reading. Books that are too hard can put children off reading.
- let your child tell you a story – listen to them and show them you are interested.



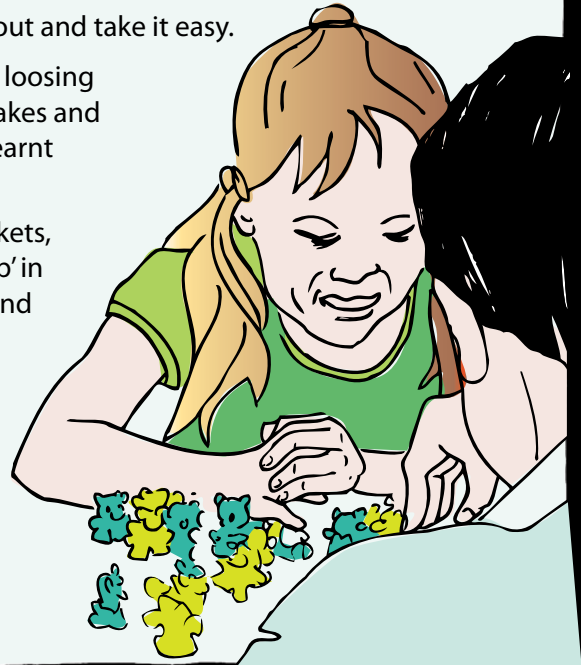
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Inside play time

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Children tell us that doing things with their Dad is more important than getting lots of toys and new stuff all the time. Have fun together inside by:

- trying something new together. It could be making something together, planting some vegetables in a pot or collecting stickers.
- helping them unwind by finding a quiet place to hang out and take it easy.
- helping them learn about how to manage winning and losing by having a go at some games with simple rules like snakes and ladders. They could even teach you a game they have learnt at school.
- helping them to use their imagination. Grab some blankets, pillows, snacks and a couple of torches and 'set-up camp' in the lounge room. Turn off the radio and the television and spend the night camping inside.
- to encourage your child's thinking through play, you can: provide challenging puzzles; play board games together; tell jokes and riddles together; do simple crosswords and word-finders; play building and construction games and play simple card games.



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Outside play time

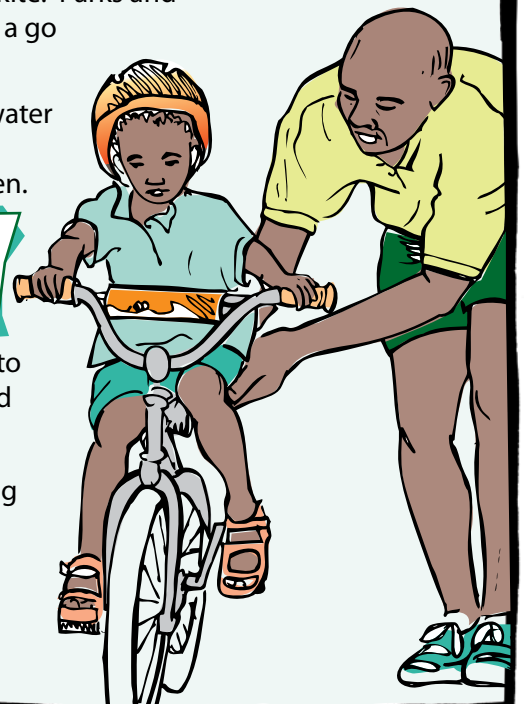
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Children tell us that doing things with their Dad is more important than getting lots of toys and new stuff. Give some of these activities a go:

- visit your local park or playground. Take a bat and ball, bike or a kite. Parks and playgrounds can be great places for children to give new games a go and meet new friends.
- go to the beach or river. Playing in the sand and in the shallow water can be great fun for kids. Take along some old containers and a plastic spade to build castles. Don't forget their hat and sunscreen.

Watch your children carefully when you are at the beach or river, especially when they are in or near the water.

- take a train or bus trip to somewhere new, to a different park or to the beach. These trips are usually great fun and can be combined with a picnic lunch.
- build their confidence and help them make new friends by giving an organised sport or activity a go. It can be a good idea to try a couple of different activities – like soccer, swimming or athletics.
- remind your child that having fun is the most important thing.



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