

Fathering after separation

TIP SHEET

Relationship Australia WA's education team have developed a range of tips to help support you during difficult and challenging times. Please feel free to share this resource with other separated Dads you may know.

For fathers who are separated and still parenting their children, these tips will help give you ideas on how best to connect with your children and how to look after yourself more effectively. Ensure you consider your health so you can be the best Dad you can be.

Here are some tips if you are a separated Dad to help you during this time:

1. Focus on the Children

A great place to start thinking about what is best for your children is to think about what you hope and want for them. Here are some ideas:

- I want to provide my children with a sense of stability and security, especially at home
- I want to prepare them to live in a fast-paced world, to survive and thrive
- I want to provide my children with a positive role model

2. Looking after yourself

One of the key elements in effective parenting is to look after yourself first. Your mental and physical fitness can make a big difference to your parenting. Develop a plan of how you will do this - from eating well to looking after your physical and mental health. If you recognise you need help in this area contact your GP sooner rather than later. Maintain relationships with family and friends that will benefit you and your children.

3. Be aware of your children's emotions

Regardless of age, children will be affected emotionally by the separation and will need understanding and support. They need to know the separation is not their fault and their job is not to reunite their parents. Explain to them what is happening in ways they can understand and give lots of reassurance that you will always be their parent and you will always love them no matter what happens.

4. Dealing with your former-partner

Dealing with your former partner can be a challenge for a separated Dad. The way you deal with your former partner can have a major effect on your children. It is important not to argue or invite conflict in front of your children and to speak positively about the other parent to your children. Children do best when they see their parents trying hard to work constructively together in their children's best interests.

5. Be the best Dad you can be

The more involved you are in your children's lives the more they will benefit. Here are some ideas:

- Share activities like bike rides, skating, cooking, movies, camping etc.
- Ask them what they would like to do with you and implement this where possible.
- Keep in contact with their school – if possible, become a volunteer in their class.
- Have a special bedtime ritual; read a story, a little chat, sing a song/ lullaby.

6. Stay in contact

Decide to stay in touch with your children and follow it through. It's very important for them that you are reliable and trustworthy. If you say that you will do something then try to keep your word. Your children will look at what you do more than what you say!

As we journey through these challenging times, please reach out for support and connection amongst your community or if you'd like further support from Relationships Australia WA you can call us on 1300 364 277.

Our Education team are continuing to facilitate Relationship Australia WA's seminars, workshops and courses face-to-face and online.

If you'd like to register your interest in attending a course on [Fathering after Separation](#), or any of our other courses, please email education@relationshipsaustralia.org.au or call 6164 0200.