

MUMS RAISING BOYS

Being a parent is one of the most complex and important roles on the planet.

Parents are a child's first and most important educators, yet they receive little or no training in what to do or how to do it. Unfortunately, children don't come with instruction manuals.

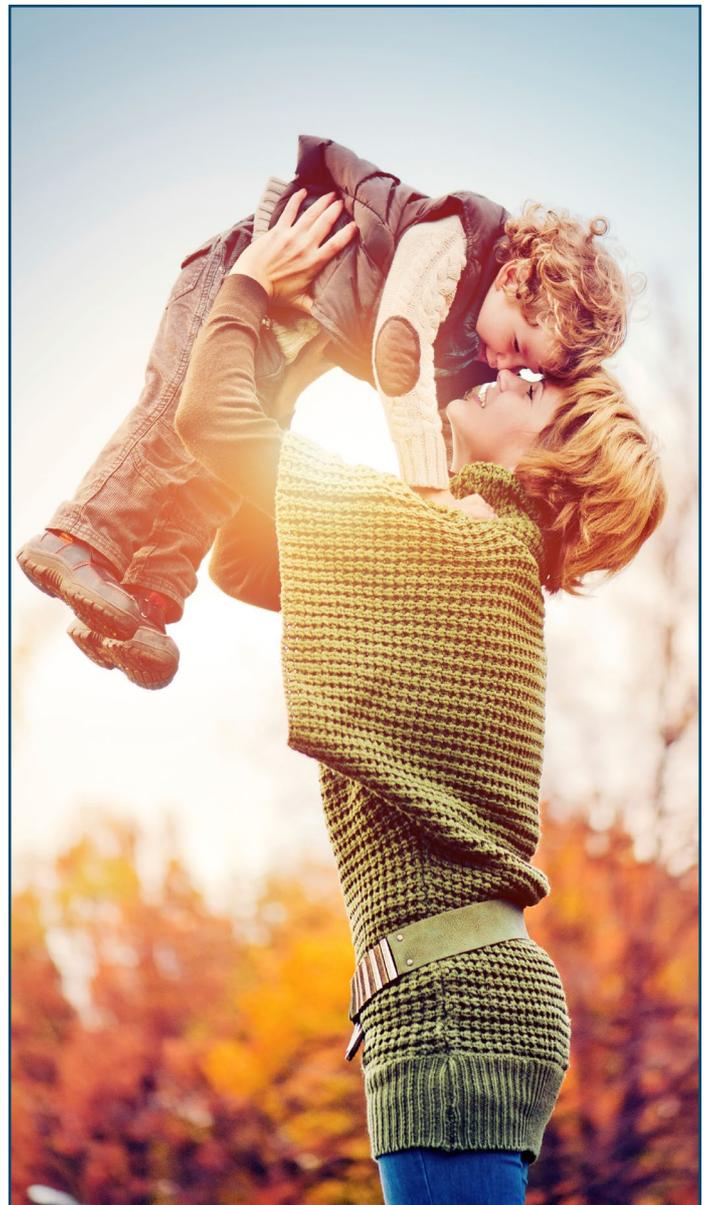
For the next two newsletters Relationships Australia WA would like to provide information for parents raising children of the opposite gender, as these relationships have special challenges, but can also be very rewarding. This edition will focus on **Mums Raising Boys** and next quarter will feature **Dads Raising Girls**.

As the primary female role model in a boy's life, Mothers play an important role in the development of their son's identity, including their ability to be nurturing. This in turn affects how they relate to others, particularly to girls and women.

While it would be ideal to have an answer book for the individual concerns a woman may face as a Mother of a boy, all boys are different and what works for one may not work for another. Situations and environments can also change rapidly, so what worked last year may not work this year.

Boys typically go through three broad stages of development: the early years (between 0-6 years), where mum is a close companion, the middle years (6 - 14 years), when children are learning 'boyhood' and often want to spend more time with dad or other males, and Teen years (14 years plus), when boys start developing into young men who can be independent of their parents.

Each stage has unique joys and challenges for Mothers. The best advice is to develop a strong and healthy relationship between the Mother and her son.



Here are few ideas to help build the mum-son bond:

- Do things with him that HE likes to do.
- Spend time one-to-one with him (sometimes these are just minutes in a big family but they're important minutes).
- Talk about things HE's interested in (even if it's not interesting to you).
- Be silly sometimes (boys usually love a joke/surprises/silliness).
- Listen to him without judgement, be curious rather than critical.
- Involve him in everyday activities such as cooking or housework. Try to make it fun!
- Have faith in him (this is a big one for males generally). Show faith in your son, and particularly your teenage son, by believing in his ability to solve his own problems – especially those that are a natural consequence of his own behaviour. Let him be resourceful, find his own solutions and gain confidence in this process.
- Keep verbal communication simple – boys often 'turn off' when you give them long winded instructions or explanations.
- Tell him WHY you're proud of him and that you're so very glad you had him.



Mothers as Role Models

- Mothers are the ideal people to teach their sons about women and what qualities women look for in a man – kindness, sense of humour, respect, strength, loving attitude.
- How mothers see themselves as women (worthy of respect, love etc) will influence how their sons see and treat them, and how they see themselves.

Our EAP Program

EAP is a free service to support you through difficult or challenging times that may occur at home or at work. To find out more about the EAP services your organisations offers please call 1300 364 277.

All calls are confidential.

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