

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Dads raising girls

TIP SHEET

Relationships Australia WA's education team have developed a range of tips to help support you during the COVID-19 outbreak. As a free resource, we encourage you to share this with your community.

Research shows that fathers are really important to their daughters. A caring dad or step-dad is a strong protective factor for a girl.

By being involved in your daughter's or stepdaughter's life and showing that you care for her, your relationship can thrive and she will more likely grow up to be strong, confident and self-respecting.

Even if you didn't have a good example of fatherhood you can learn to be better than your own father was.

Here are some tips to build your relationship with your daughter:

- **Make the time**
If you're working from home, don't use work as an excuse not to spend time with her. Girls will often associate you not being available with a lack of care. Develop a routine - be clear about your start and finish times and when you can't be disturbed. Perhaps plan to do something special with her after work one day a week.
- **Get involved in her education**
If she's now schooling at home, sit with her while she does her schoolwork and help her with it. You can extend her education and curiosity about the world by doing virtual tours of museums and art galleries. There are now a host of virtual walkthroughs developed in response to COVID-19.
- **Slow down and engage**
We know that girls are under huge pressure from social media. The business that family life has become is another pressure. Take this opportunity to slow down and get to know your daughter. You will both benefit.
- **Do some fun activities with her**
This is a good time to think outside the square and build common interests. Play board games with her, cook the evening meal together, dance, play ball games. If you're skilled as a handyman, build something together. She will really benefit from having her horizons broadened.

- **Don't be too protective**

Most dads are understandably protective of their daughters, but this doesn't mean you should treat her like a princess. Enjoy the outdoors with her and do things that encourage her to be adventurous, brave and build her confidence. Go for a walk at night with a torch, teach her how to climb a tree, have play fights and water fights.

- **Make the effort to talk to her**

Talking to her may feel awkward, but just remember that girls are 'feelings focussed' and want to be understood. It is said that a girl's voice is "the conduit for her heart, brains and spirit". Listen to her and respect her ideas. If it doesn't come easily, the most important thing to do is make an effort.

- **Remember, she's only young once. Make the most of this time to enjoy it.**

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 will continue to facilitate Relationship Australia WA's seminars, workshops and courses face-to-face once government guidelines allow. You might like to like us on Facebook to keep up to date with support information and details of services we can offer during this time.

If you'd like to register your interest in attending a course on ***Dads Raising Girls*** once available, or any of our other courses, please email education@relationshipsaustralia.org.au or call 6164 0200.