

Dads and child care services

Did you know?

Each year in Australia well over one hundred thousand men become dads for the first time. This is an exciting time but it may also seem a little overwhelming.

Today, many fathers are much more involved in the responsibility of parenting to provide a loving, safe, nurturing and stimulating environment in which their child can grow and learn. Fathers are becoming more aware of the significant impact their actions have on the health and well being of their children and their family as a whole.



What do men want from a child care service?

Overall there has been little research done in Australia around the expectations that men have of child care services, and there is also little known about whether men have different expectations from women. There are a few general things that have been published which indicate that often men prefer:

- more task orientated activities to promote conversation and to give them a sense of contributing to community/family.
- practical information and advice – they want to leave a service with clearly understandable practical actions they can put into place to remedy an issue.
- not to form long term relationships with individuals in services.
- not to be treated as a special case, patronised, or encounter behaviours that leads them to believe they can't be trusted with children.

How does this general list of what men prefer when dealing with a child care service compare to what you would like?

Working with your child care service for the health and wellbeing of your child

- It is important that you feel welcome and supported by the child care service that your child attends. Take the time to give the carers some feedback about how welcome and supported you feel.
- Be willing to make practical suggestions about what things could be done to further support you in your fathering role. Your feedback will also help other fathers in the future.
- You are in a partnership with the child care service. Make the most of the opportunities that are offered or create the opportunities that you require to support you in your fathering role.
- The carers are a good source of information about your child. They are always willing to share the things that your child has done during the day and highlight what your child is interested in, and has really enjoyed. Ask for practical advice and suggestions for activities to do at home with your child.
- You can develop good support networks with other families that use the service. You may want the child care service to organise "fathers" and/or "family" activities to enable you to meet other fathers and parents.

This Parent Fact Sheet is available in different community languages and can be downloaded from the Early Childhood Connections website www.econnections.com.au

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Hand washing and nose wiping

Why is it important to help your child wash their hands and wipe their nose?

Supporting your child to learn how to wash their hands and wipe their nose properly will help reduce the spread of infection. This is particularly important when they attend child care and are mixing with other children.

When should you and your child wash your hands?

It is recommended that you and your child wash your hands often and especially:

- when you arrive/depart from child care
- before and after eating or handling food
- after cleaning or handling garbage
- after outdoor play
- after nappy change, and toileting of self or children
- after dealing with body fluids (for example, blood, nose secretions, vomit)
- after handling animals

Assist and encourage your child to wash their hands regularly. When you are washing your hands talk about the activity you have just finished, thus reminding the child of the times when they should wash their hands.

How should you wash your hands?

It is recommended that you wash your hands:

- using liquid soap for 10-15 seconds,
- rub all hand surfaces thoroughly, including wrists, back and front of hands, between fingers and underneath rings,
- rinse hands with running warm water, and
- dry thoroughly with a clean paper towel. This can also be used to turn the tap off.



In some situations it may not be possible to use soap and water. You can then use non-water cleansers or antiseptics such as alcohol based hand rub, gel or foam. Be careful that your child does not inhale the fumes.

How should you wipe your child's nose?

It is best to use a clean tissue when wiping your child's nose and dispose of the used tissue safely and appropriately – ideally in a covered rubbish bin. Wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.

Child care staff will often use gloves when wiping your child's nose. You may like to explain to your child that gloves are being used to help stop the spread of "germs" and so they don't get sick.

How can you get your child involved?

- Show your child how to wash their hands and wipe their nose in a fun and supportive way.
- Make sure they can get the tissues and have a place to wash their hands.
- Give positive feedback when your child tries. Allow them to 'own' their development and encourage them to try again next time. For example, say "Well done! Let's look in the mirror and see if there is more that you can wash/wipe".
- You may want to put up some pictures and/or develop simple songs or rhymes to follow.
- Your child will model your actions.

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