

# Supporting Your Child's Emotional Development

For mental health month, we explore the importance of supporting your child's emotional development. When dads and father figures help their child to navigate and understand their emotions it leads to children who grow into emotionally mature adults.

A child's social and emotional wellbeing is a vital part of their overall health and development. As fathers you play an important role in helping your children develop their social and emotional skills and understandings. You can teach and model the kinds of skills, attitudes, and behaviours your children need to master, plus you can be important support for the social and emotional learning that happens at school.



## Top Tips for Dads

- **Schedule emotional check-ins.** You could try having days of the week on the fridge and getting the kids to draw an emoji for how they are feeling. This is a good way to monitor them over time.
- **Help them explore and express emotions.** Read stories or watch videos or TV shows and discuss the character's emotions. Talk about how they might be feeling and how they respond to these emotions.
- **Practise gratitude.** Take time to chat with your kids each day, or before bed and encourage them to reflect on what they're grateful for or what went well today. Doing this regularly has been proven in research to increase happiness and foster both physical and mental health.
- **Make sure kids get ample sleep.** Primary school kids need 10-12 hours per day. Try to keep clear and consistent routines including no screen time one hour before bed, a 'wind-down' routine before bed, such as quiet reading or story time before lights out.

