

Work and family balance

Being a parent, raising children and being part of a family is a full-time job. For working dads, balancing work and family is tricky.

A lot of dads end up working full-time while mums/partners are at home during the first 12-months of their children's lives and dads continue to work full-time even when both parents are working and the kids are older¹.

Dads feel work has an impact on their ability to be a dad² and a lot of dads want to spend more time with their kids³.

“Kids need you more than your money.”⁴

We're keen to help dads figure out this balance to enable them to be the dad they want to be. To do this, workplaces and dads need to have conversations about what dads need.

Whether dads work full-time, do shift work, somewhere in-between or they don't work at all, their role as a dad is always a full-time job and workplaces need to recognise this.



What can dads do?

Dads, families and workplaces need to have conversations about what dads need. Follow these three steps to get the conversation going.

STEP 1 - FIGURING OUT A WORK AND FAMILY BALANCE FOR THE DAD

- Dad to figure out his ideal parenting and work scenario.
- Dad and mum/partner to discuss the expectations they each have for themselves and each other about parenting and working.
- Dad and mum/partner to brainstorm what a more balanced work and family life might look like. For example: sharing parenting roles at home, dad working less, dad working from home, mum/partner going back to work, mum/partner working more etc.
- Dad and mum/partner to talk this through with the kids and get their input – regardless of their age!
- Dad and mum/partner to come up with a plan of what dad needs from his workplace.

STEP 2 - CONVERSATION WITH THE DAD'S WORKPLACE

- Dad to find out about workplace policies like parental leave, partner leave, flexible work arrangements, personal, annual, sick and carer's leave.
- Dad to discuss these policies, and how they can meet his family's needs, with his workplace

STEP 3 - FOLLOWING THROUGH

- Dad and mum/partner to decide on a work and family balance.
- Dad to continue discussions with the workplace.
- Workplace to implement a supportive working arrangement for dad.

¹ Facts and Figures: Work and family. (2019, February 12). Australian Institute of Family Studies. Retrieved from <https://aifs.gov.au>.

² Support for Fathers National Survey. (2019). Melbourne, VIC: Relationships Australia Victoria.

³ Working Better: Fathers, family and work – contemporary perspectives. (2009). Manchester, England: Equality and Human Rights Commission (UK).

⁴ Support for Fathers National Consultations. (2018). Western Sydney, NSW: Relationships Australia Victoria.