



Role of parents and carers in building respectful relationships

As a parent or carer, you play a primary role in teaching your child to treat others with respect, and to help them set an expectation to be treated with respect. Children and young people need the skills to build safe and healthy relationships with their family, friends, peers, work mates and others, in all aspects of their lives.

While schools play an important role in providing students with respectful relationships education, it is the responsibility of parents, carers and the community more broadly to model relationships that are respectful, and to support young people to address issues of sexual assault and consent.

You can directly shape your child's values and understanding of relationships, including seeking permission and setting boundaries, recognising behaviours that cause harm and seeking help, communicating with others, valuing different opinions, resolving conflict and promoting equality and inclusion.

The conversations parents and carers have at home are fundamental in helping children and young people develop the social and emotional skills needed to successfully:

- engage positively with others
- develop a positive sense of self and resilience
- identify and respond appropriately to their own emotions and those of others
- accept and resolve differences respectfully
- challenge stereotypes
- understand consent and know how to seek help
- be confident in challenging unacceptable behaviours they see
- build relationships that are based on equality and respect.

By building these personal and social skills and creating a culture of respect, issues such as domestic, family, sexual violence and all forms of violence or abuse, discrimination and harassment are less likely to occur.





Respectful relationship

Respectful relationships education, delivered informally by parents and carers and formally in schools helps to develop students' skills, attitudes and understanding of gender equality, respectful and non-violent relationships.

Effective respectful relationships education in schools uses a whole-school approach, which means enlisting staff, student and family commitment to equal, positive respectful relationships and demonstrating this commitment in the classroom, staffroom, playground and more broadly to the whole community.



Consent

Conversations about respectful relationships, including consent and sexuality education, are important as they provide children with accurate information to help them make informed choices and empower them to keep themselves and others safe.

Having these conversations isn't always easy but by talking with your child about these things respectfully and non-judgementally, you strengthen your relationship and let them know they can come to you for information about consent, sex and relationships.



Sexual assault

If your child discloses to you that they are the victim of a sexual assault or abuse, it may be extremely distressing for you to hear as their primary caregiver. It's important that you try to stay calm and supportive, reassure them you believe them and you are here to support them.

With your support they might choose to make a report to the police. They also may wish to seek support from a sexual assault service. There are no limits on when someone can report sexual assault to the police, even if it happened a long time ago.

Practical information to assist you with speaking to your child about respectful relationships can be found on the following websites:

- **Parentline** 1300 30 1300
- **Kids Helpline**
- **Raising Children Network**
- **True's Relationship Ready Parent and Carer online training modules**
- **Respect.gov.au**
- **[Respectful relationships education hub](#)**

