

Relationships Australia

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FATHERS COME FIRST ON FOURTH

Fathers come first on the 4th of September for Father's Day and it is an important day to highlight the significant role fathers play in our lives according to Relationships Australia.

Over the past few decades there has been a consistent shift in the role of fathers in the family with male role models playing a greater and more influential part in the upbringing of children and greater awareness culturally of the impact of fathers in families.

But fathers come in many shapes and sizes in modern society – from biological, adopted, step, surrogate, foster, grandfather through to male friends or relatives that are male role models – and all are equally deserving of being recognized on Father's Day.

“It is important to broaden the definition of a Father on Father's Day and embrace all of those male role models that influence our children, our families and ourselves”, said Mary Mertin-Ryan, National Director, Relationships Australia.

“Whilst it is often a father or grandfather that has a profound relationship with a child, it may also be that, due to circumstances, an uncle, next-door neighbour or a school teacher steps into that role and shouldn't be excluded from being recognized on Father's Day”.

“An expression of appreciation and recognition of the importance of their relationship with us or our children can be expressed in many different ways. Spending an amount of money on a present or gift may be the expression of choice, but there are also other ways of appreciating a person through a gesture or act of service such as mowing the lawn”, said Ms Mertin-Ryan.

“It doesn't cost you anything but time to give someone special a hug and to say ‘I love you and thanks for all that you do for me’” said Ms Mertin-Ryan “but to a father or male role model, those moments mean a lot.”

“Regardless of whether you are 5 or 50, it is important to take a few moments out of your busy life to think about all the things that your father or male role model has done for you and to let him know how much you appreciate him.”

Here are a few ideas of how you can express your love and appreciation for that special someone, no matter the age!

- Cook. Men love food, so why not spend some time with your father cooking a special meal or a batch of his favourite biscuits and spend some quality time with your Dad.
- Wash. Give his car a clean and polish so he can take a break and relax.
- Play. Grab a soccer ball, golf club, tennis racket or whatever sport your special someone loves and spend some time playing with him in the backyard or at the local park.

- Fish. Organise some fishing gear and take your special someone to the local fishing spot and spend some time talking while dangling a line.
- Take a photo or two of your family and put them together in an album to give to him or even better, use the digital camera and make an album online.
- Make a card out of magazine cuttings, old photos and any leftover craft materials and write an original message inside.
- Write a letter to your special father figure (handwritten on lovely paper). Tell him in writing how special he is and how much he means to you. Highlight all those times that he went above and beyond to make your life better.
- Spend some quality time with your father or make sure you call for a chat (not just for this day but on a regular basis). Time is a rare commodity but a very valuable one to invest with the important people in our lives.

“Whatever you choose to do to show your father how much you love him, remember to give him a hug and say those three words ‘I Love You’ – it means the world to anyone” said Ms Mertin-Ryan.

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For further information contact Mary Mertin-Ryan, National Director, Relationships Australia on 02 6285 4466 (telephone) or 0410-623 030 (mobile) or www.relationships.com.au or by calling 1300 364 277