

Why connect at school?

Peter held his daughter Rachel's hand tightly. It was a first for him to be taking Rachel to school. His heart was pounding as they made their way to the classroom. There was the teacher, Ms Lim. She smiled at them, "Welcome Rachel, hello Peter." Another child waved at Rachel. She seemed happy to have a friend to play with. So why was Peter still nervous?

"We're having a morning tea for parents next week. Will you come?" Ms Lim asked. "I'll try," Peter said.

"It all seems different from when I went to school," he thought as he headed out the door. "They seem to want parents to be involved. I wonder what else has changed?"



Schools can be scary places, and not just for children...

Parents and carers also need to feel welcome and at ease to get the most out of being involved with their children's school.

When parents and carers are involved and connected with school, children learn better and have better mental health. This is an important emphasis in schools nowadays that may be very different from what parents or carers remember, or what they may have experienced in another country.

Connecting at school

Being connected at school is not about having mobile phones and computers. It's about knowing you can get support, that you will be listened to, and that you can work together with school staff to help your child learn and develop. Working together to care for children is the best way for schools and parents/carers to support children's mental health.

- *When schools and parents/carers work together*, children find it easier to understand what is expected from them and are better able to manage. They have fewer behaviour problems and do better at school.
- *When parents/carers are connected to school* it helps them get support when they need it. Support may come from talking with teachers or other school staff, or from making connections with other parents. Schools help families to connect through having lots of different activities that parents/carers can get involved in.
- *Being connected to the school helps keep parents informed.* Parents who are informed about what their children are learning at school and about opportunities to get involved are able to support them better at home.



School is a place for adults to make new friends too!

Having opportunities to get to know other parents, to find out how to support your children's learning, or to get involved in class activities can help parents and carers feel connected to the school.

How parents and carers can get connected to the school

- Make contact with your child's teacher and keep in touch. Ask for help if you don't understand something.
- Check for notices that are sent home and keep informed about school activities through the school newsletter.
- Attend information sessions and social activities at the school whenever you can.
- Make contact with other parents at your school: perhaps meet up informally with parents of other children in your child's class, find out about parent social groups that meet at or near the school, or join a parent committee.
- Take an interest in the school council – and consider joining it if you have the time and skills.

KidsMatter has developed a range of resources for parents and carers to help keep them informed about children's mental health and how they can help.

Keep an eye out at your school for further KidsMatter resources that provide information on children's social and emotional learning, on child development and parenting, and on mental health problems in children.



This resource is part of the KidsMatter Primary initiative. The team at KidsMatter welcomes your feedback at www.kidsmatter.edu.au



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