

Emerging Minds

National Workforce Centre
for Child Mental Health

My child's support network



About this guide

Having access to supportive relationships can help your child to thrive. These relationships can also assist you as a parent, and be a support for your family.

This guide will help you to think about the relationships in your child's life. It will also help to identify how these relationships can support your child and your family. Do this exercise for each child. You might ask a friend, family member or support person to help you.

Instructions

1. Identify your child's connections

On the following page write your child's name and add their photo.

2. Consider the role these relationships play

Around your child's name or photo, write down or insert photos of the most important relationships in their life. This could include family members, relatives, friends, early childhood educators and teachers. Focus on the people who have the closest relationships or spend the most time with your child. These relationships are a starting point for your child's support network.

3. Offer your child their own 'My connections' worksheet

Help them identify the people in their life that they can contact if they need or want to. Invite them to keep it in a safe place. Why are the relationships with the people in your child's support network important for your child? What role do they play? This is a great task to do with your child. If this is not possible, talk with your child when you have finished. To get their view you might ask questions like:

- "If you got to school and found you did not have lunch or recess, who do you think you could go to for help?"
- "If you were feeling sad or worried, who could you talk to?"
- "Who could take you to or pick you up from school if Mum or Dad could not?"
- "If Mum or Dad are sick, who do you think could look after you? (For a few hours, or a few days)"
- "Who do you like to have fun with other than Mum or Dad?"

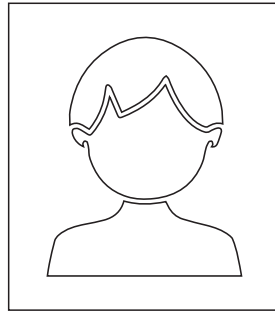
Remember, we all experience relationships differently and your child may have a different view to you. Your child's view may well fluctuate and be dependent on their last encounter, rather than the enduring nature of the relationship. For example, Nanna said they could not have and the child felt this was unfair, so

today they are cross with Nanna and she may not rate on their list in the first instance. Asking children can be helpful, but remember to be clear with your child if their choice is not possible. Have more than one child? Download worksheet copies from www.emergingminds.com.au/resources/library/

1.

Your child's connections

Your child's name:



Your child's photo here

Name:

What roles do they play in your child's life?

Name:

What roles do they play in your child's life?

Name:

What roles do they play in your child's life?

Name:

What roles do they play in your child's life?

Name:

What roles do they play in your child's life?

Name:

What roles do they play in your child's life?

2.

Identify your child's supports

It can be helpful for you to build on your child's support network and strengthen these relationships for periods when you or your family are going through tough times or changes.

Completing the following questions helps you to think about:

- **your child's needs**
 - **what role the people in your child's network could play in supporting your child**
- and
- **what you would like them to do and what they might need to understand.**

Your child needs to:

- **feel safe and nurtured**
- **be provided with emotional support**
- **know who they could ask questions and get honest answers from**
- **have someone they could ask for help and receive help from**
- **have fun**
- **connect with their community (e.g. sport, groups, cultural activities)**
- **have somewhere to stay overnight (if needed) and have somewhere to stay for a few days (if needed).**

Who else supports your child with their needs?

Is there more you would like this person to consider or do to support your child?

When times are tough what else would you like this person to do to support your child?

When can you have a conversation with this person about this? Who could support you to have this conversation?

Is this a person your child could contact in an emergency? Contact details and phone number:

Strengthen your child's support network

Here are some suggestions to help you and your child strengthen the relationship with people identified in their support network:

- Spend time with the people in your child's network. Get to know them and help them to understand why their relationship with your child is important to you and to your child.
- Let your child see that you have trust in the relationship.
- Nurture your child's connections by creating opportunities to spend time together.
- Where appropriate, spend time as a family with the people in your child's support network.
- Create opportunities for short visits, play or activities with people in your child's support network.
- Let people in your child's support network do things with your child when you are feeling well (e.g. picking up your child from school, taking them to sport, having play dates with other children).

Also consider:

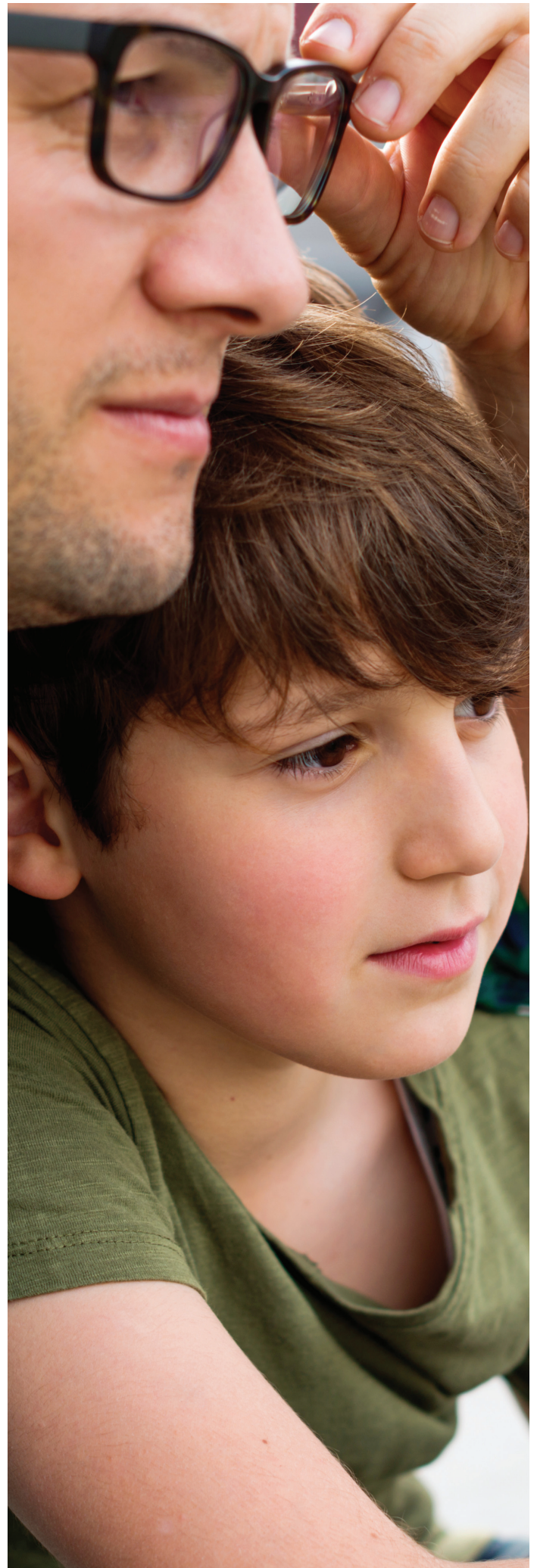
Who would notice if your child was struggling? Would they talk to you if they noticed that your child seemed worried or concerned?

Remember:

Sometimes those that are the closest to you and your child may not know how to bring up their concerns or worries for you and your child. They might feel you would be offended.

Therefore:

Starting the conversation with the people in your child's support network and being clear about how you would like your child to be supported is a great first step.



My connections (child's perspective)

When I am at home

Who can answer my questions if Mum/Dad are experiencing a tough time?

Who helps me to stay involved in things I like to do (e.g. sport, music, drama, dance, groups)?

Who will look after me if Mum/Dad are experiencing a tough time?

Who can I talk to when I am upset, worried or scared?

Who can I spend time with to have some fun?

Who can I play with?



My connections (child's perspective)

When I am at school

My teacher is:

Where can I go if I need some time out?

Who can I play with?

Who can I talk to when I am upset, worried or scared?

Who can help me to get to school and to get home?

In an emergency I can call these people:

Name:

Name:

Name:

Kids Helpline: **1800 55 1800**

Contact number:

Contact number:

Contact number:

Delivery partners:



The National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health under the National Support for Child and Youth Mental Health Program

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