



# World Teacher's Day

## How to have a great relationship with our kids' teachers

By the time your child graduates high school, they will have spent about 17, 640 hours at school. That's a lot of hours. In fact, on a typical school day, our kids [spend 2-3 times](#) as many hours with their school teacher than they spend with us, their parents and caregivers.

Our teachers work hard. On average, Australian teachers work 45 hours a week, with many even working on weekends to keep up with the workload. Yet 71% of teachers feel as though their work is unappreciated, and that their profession is not respected. I don't know about you, but anyone who spends twice as much time with my kids as I do on a regular basis deserves to feel all the appreciation in the world. And while buying a #1 Teacher mug or a box of chocolates as a gift on World Teachers Day certainly helps, there are things we can do all year round to have a great relationship with our kids' teachers, and help them to feel supported and appreciated:

### *Communication*

Having open and frequent communication with the teachers goes a long way towards establishing a supportive relationship. This includes taking a proactive approach at the start of the year, where you should share with the teachers any relevant information that may affect your child's performance or behaviour at school. This includes medical conditions, learning difficulties, and even special interests. Then throughout the school year, keep the teacher updated about any changes in your family's or your child's circumstances. Communication can occur through emails or phone calls on an as-needed basis, but also make sure to attend parent-teacher conferences, school events, and any other meetings organized by the school. Frequent contact fosters open communication. Finally, if your child is facing any academic or behavioural challenges, collaborate with the teacher to address any difficulties and identify strategies that you can employ together to support your child's learning.

### *Involvement*

Show interest in your child's education by asking them about their day and experiences in class. When you demonstrate an interest in their education, it sends a positive message. If you can, make time to get involved in the school community. Volunteer in your child's classroom as a parent helper, participate in school events, or join the parent council. Getting involved both supports your child's education and eases the burden on your child's teachers. Finally, support classroom rules and expectations. Don't undermine your child's teachers by disrespecting them at home. Encourage your child to take responsibility in the learning process, and follow the guidelines set by their teachers.

## Respect

I wish this didn't need to be said, but sadly it does: Don't verbally threaten, intimidate, or get physically aggressive with your kids' teachers. It's never ok. Respect goes beyond that though. Treat teachers with kindness and appreciation for their work. Take time to acknowledge and appreciate their efforts and dedication. Be grateful for the time they invest into your children. Make sure you see your child's teacher as a whole person (hopefully as an adult you no longer believe that teachers sleep at the school!), with responsibilities and interests beyond teaching. Avoid contacting them outside of school hours and be patient in awaiting their responses.

Teachers do one of the most important jobs in our society. They are shaping the next generation of leaders, thinkers, caregivers. Let's do what we can to thank them for everything they do for our kids.



### AUTHOR

## Dr Justin Coulson

Dr Justin Coulson is a dad to 6 daughters. He is the parenting expert and co-host of Channel Nine's Parental Guidance, and he and his wife host Australia's #1 podcast for parents and family: The Happy Families Podcast. He has written 7 books about families and parenting. For further details visit [happyfamilies.com.au](https://happyfamilies.com.au).