

Acceptance: parent teamwork

Acceptance - making parenting easier

By Parenting Research Centre

- Acceptance is a big part of working together to resolve conflict and discuss issues.
- Acceptance can strengthen your relationships and create a more enjoyable family environment.

Acceptance means living with and valuing differences in others. It can make a real difference to your relationships with your partner, family, friends and children. It can also make a real difference to how well you and your partner adjust to the changes that parenting brings.

Acceptance: why it's important

Acceptance is a crucial part of keeping relationships healthy. It's an attitude that can also reduce the stress and challenges of working together to raise children.

It's easy to lose sight of your relationship when all of your energy is directed towards children. When there's stress or unhappiness in a relationship, it becomes even harder to work together and share parenting tasks.

Acceptance means partners value each other's differences. They can agree to disagree. And they pursue personal needs in a way that keeps the health of the overall relationship in mind. Not only in the early days – when differences are part of the attraction – but throughout the life of a relationship.

Acceptance makes it easier to appreciate the positives and resolve differences, leading to greater intimacy and goodwill. That creates a more enjoyable environment for the whole family.

Acceptance can profoundly improve your partner's readiness to listen and accept your perspective. It can even open the doors to change. People who feel accepted are more willing to listen and take suggestions on board.

Tips for strengthening acceptance

Ideas	Things to do
<p>Spend time on your relationship with your partner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend time on shared interests. • Show your interest by asking about your partner's activities and joining in when invited. • Think of some things you could do to show your partner your love and appreciation. • Be polite. • Think of activities you did together when you first met. Consider what you liked and how you might do those activities together again.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with your partner about happy times you've had together.
<p>Focus on what you can do to solve a problem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide what you want to happen. • Invite your partner to help solve the problem, without pushing, or blaming. Identify ways you can solve the problem, even if your partner doesn't participate. • Get help from others if you need to. • Focus on what outcome you would like, rather than on what your partner should or should not have done.
<p>Take responsibility for what you want.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to identify what's important to you in your life; for example, communicating with others, affection, fun, safety, financial security, time together as a family. • Think about how you can meet those needs, including seeking help from your partner, friends, family, support groups and professionals.
<p>Be generous with your understanding. Give your partner the benefit of the doubt.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can be difficult to explain what you want and how you feel to someone else – others also find it difficult. Sometimes the words come out wrong! • Encourage your partner to open up by asking <u>open-ended questions</u>, and not interrupting. • Look for and acknowledge your partner's positive intentions; for example, 'I know that you are working long hours because you want to take care of us'. • Ask your partner to explain or give more information if you don't understand what is being said. • Listen, without defending your own position or behaviour. • Acknowledge your partner's point of view even if you don't agree, for example 'I can understand why you are angry that I asked my parents over for the weekend without talking to you first'. • Avoid jumping to conclusions, blaming or criticising your partner.
<p>Look after yourself.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set time aside each day or week to do something you enjoy; for example, have a bath, play netball, read a book, watch television. • Pursue your own work or creative interests; for example, do an adult short course, go for a promotion. • Stay healthy, have regular check-ups with your doctor, and eat well and regularly. • Make a deal with a friend to care for each other's

children so that you can have a break or go on a date with your partner.

Getting help

Acceptance is not about tolerating harmful behaviour. If you are in a relationship that involves violence, seek professional help, and do whatever is necessary to ensure the safety of you and your children.

Rated  (3 ratings)

GLOSSARY

open-ended questions

Questions that begin with 'why' or 'how', or that ask 'What do you think about ... ?' These questions encourage creative thinking and problem-solving skills and lead to discussion and shared understanding.

More to explore

- ▶ Getting support

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References

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