

Education New South Wales

Mother's Day: Sydney preschools switch to 'parent's day' under inclusive push

Celebrating Mother's Day is not as straightforward as it used to be, with the PC brigade hoping to rename the day. Here are the Sydney preschools running non-gendered events.

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Media-link

Deves is 'an outstanding candidate' who speaks 'common sense'

A growing number of Sydney childcare centres and preschools have snubbed Mother's Day this year and are instead hosting "Parents" or "Family Day" events under the woke banner of being more "inclusive".

The attempts to replace Mother's Day with non-gendered terms have been criticised for being part of a broader war on female-specific terms such as "pregnant woman" and "mothers", as a result of [the trans debate](#).

The Inner Sydney Montessori School, which has preschools and a primary school with campuses around Balmain and Rozelle, is now hosting a "Parents and Carers" morning tea.

Another up-market preschool in Sydney's east sent a letter home to parents last week advising they had "decided to change the name of our annual Mother's Day breakfast to Family Day Breakfast. This will allow all families to be included".

At Stanmore Kindy, there is a pause on celebrations this year because of Covid, but it said it had already switched to a parents' day prior to the pandemic "out of inclusive reasons".



(File image) Children playing at preschool, some of which are no longer hosting Mother's Day events. Picture: Rob MacColl

At Bellingen Public School, the local P & C association has run a "Mother's and Parents Day" stall so the wording could be "inclusive as much as possible", they say.

Organisers told parents that "we are hoping to have some gifts on the stall that will also suit dads who are doing both jobs. So keep that in mind too when considering gift donation ideas".

A P & C spokeswoman said: "I am aware that Father's and Mother's day can be a painful time for children who feel there is not a place for them. They have also always given their mother a gift on Father's day."

Blaxland Preschool Kindergarten in the Blue Mountains was also asked about their approach to the day, but would not disclose whether they were holding traditional Mother's Day events, stating "we want to make sure events are inclusive for all children".

But Women's Forum Australia chief executive Rachael Wong said the term "parents day" would theoretically be just as insensitive as "Mother's Day".

"Perhaps the change has been made in a bid to be sensitive to those whose mothers are no longer around for various reasons, but what about those who no longer have any parents?" she said.

"Wouldn't Parent's Day also be insensitive? Given attempts to abolish terms like "mother", "women" and other female-related terms from the public discourse, it is reasonable to suspect that this is yet another attempt to erase women in a misguided attempt to be 'inclusive'."

A concerned Sydney mother whose child missed out on a Mother's Day event said she thought it was "part of a wider trend of eliminating mums, which is upsetting".

The infographic is titled "Including diverse families on Mother's Day and Father's Day" and features a green circle with a stick figure icon. It includes two photographs at the top: one of a family (father, mother, and two children) and another of a teacher and a child working at a table. The infographic lists five tips for educators, each with a numbered icon. It also includes two quotes from children about Mother's Day and Father's Day. At the bottom, it mentions the "Our School Support Guide" and logos for "Prosper Project Australia" and "rainbow families".

What can educators do to include all families?

1 Asking families how they would like their child to celebrate the day is a great place to start. And then use their words when talking about their families. Ask parents and children for direction and follow their lead.

2 On Mother's Day and Father's Day give the option to make a gift for a special adult - not necessarily a mum or dad.

3 Avoid gender stereotypes in children's crafts. Steer away from cards with flowers for mum or ties for dad.

4 Don't let a child be alone. If your school has a Mother's Day event where mothers come in, make sure no child is alone while others have a family member present. Make sure someone—maybe a teacher can be there to be with that child.

5 Use the day to talk about different kinds of families. Not every family has one mum and one dad. Make it safe to celebrate any supportive relationship a child has. Provide books in the classroom that show different kinds of families.

Quotes from children:

- "The teachers would ask how many Mother's Day or Father's Day presents we wanted and that was it."
- "I have 2 dads, so on Mother's Day I make a card for my aunt"
- "My dads don't wear ties so I tell funny giving them a card with a tie on it"

Our School Support Guide has more information about how to include diverse families on Mother's Day and Father's Day.

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Official advice from Early Childhood Australia: "Avoid gender stereotypes in children's crafts. Steer away from cards with flowers for mum or ties for dad." Picture: Supplied

It's nonsensical because same-sex female couples can celebrate Mother's Day and same sex-male couples can celebrate Father's Day," she said.

"A sensitive approach for children who don't have mums is to have a mothers and special friends day."

The official advice from peak early childhood advocacy group Early Childhood Australia on April 20 about handling Mother's Day says that a new resource has been developed for childcare staff to "deepen their understanding of inclusion and diversity".

The tips tell educators to give the children the option to make a gift for a special adult, "not necessarily a mum".

"Avoid gender stereotypes in children's crafts. Steer away from cards with flowers for mum or ties for dad."