

Support for parenting

Raising children can be rewarding and enjoyable. Yet, as every parent and carer knows, it also has its challenges.

Attending to children's physical, emotional, social and learning needs is sometimes very demanding, and it can help to have support. Research into Australian families shows that parents and carers who have support from family, friends, schools, or community-based services are better able to manage these demands.

Just as families come in all shapes and sizes, there are many different ways to parent children. There is no single 'right way' and no parent or carer is perfect. However, there are some general principles that can make a positive difference to everyone.

Practical support

All parents and carers can benefit from support with the everyday tasks of caring for children. Asking for, and receiving, help with things like child care, transport, and household tasks means your responsibilities are shared and stress is reduced. Depending on your circumstances, this kind of practical support may be provided by extended family, close friends, other parents, or even community organisations.



Receiving advice and practical support makes parenting easier and helps to sustain your own wellbeing. This will benefit your child too!



KidsMatter helps schools identify relevant resources and programs to make available to parents and carers.

Supportive relationships

It's important you are able to discuss the joys and challenges of parenting with others in your life. Schools are in a great position to be able to build on this kind of support for families. A school is a wonderful place for parents and carers to make connections with each other and create positive relationships. Staff are also in a position to work collaboratively with parents and carers, involving them in children's learning and development, and providing parenting advice when needed.

Parenting information

Reliable parenting information is another valuable method of support for families. For example, information about children's development can help parents and carers to understand children better and respond more effectively to their changing needs. Or information on effective discipline can help parents and carers to find positive ways of managing children's behaviour.

See the KidsMatter Primary parenting information sheets online at www.kidsmatter.edu.au.

Parenting education

As children develop, so too do their needs. This means that the challenges and demands of parenting change.

Education is one way parents and carers can adapt their skills and strategies to suit their family situation.

Parenting education may be presented in different ways, including the following.

Information sessions on parenting and child development

- Sessions run by people with expertise on parenting issues that may be offered at school or in the community.

Parenting programs offered by trained parenting educators

- Programs delivered over several sessions focussed either on general parenting issues or on a particular topic – for example, resilience, step-parenting, or children with challenging behaviours.

Parenting education provided by a mental health professional

- Private sessions with a mental health professional to deal with specific difficulties. This is especially helpful for developing strategies to support an individual child.

This resource is part of a range of KidsMatter Primary information sheets for families and school staff. View them all online at www.kidsmatter.edu.au



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