

# Raising strong children

Aboriginal Parent Easy Guide



Parenting SA

Children grow up strong when they feel loved and connected to family and culture. When they are happy, healthy and confident they are better able to deal with life's ups and downs.

**All children face upsets and challenges in life, and each child reacts differently. Some are naturally more resilient and able to deal with things and bounce back – others need more help.**

## Children do best in life when they:

- > are part of a strong family
- > feel loved and safe
- > have self-confidence and pride
- > are optimistic and see the good in things
- > have good friends, role models and mentors
- > have a sense of humour
- > have a strong sense of identity and connection to family and culture.



Help children aim high and see all the possibilities for their future!

Spending time with family, sharing culture and learning about their history can help children be strong and resilient.



Government of  
South Australia

Helping parents be their best

## Things that help children be strong:

- > **a strong spirit** – self-confidence, pride and connection to culture
- > **a strong family** – who take care of themselves, deal with problems and stay positive
- > **good friends** – they can talk to and trust
- > **a safe, calm home** – with routines and not too many disruptions
- > **help to learn** – to try new things and find what they are good at. Encourage their school work, activities or sports
- > **positive thinking** – help them turn negative thoughts into positive ones
- > **a sense of humour** – help children see the funny side of things, have fun and laugh together
- > **guidance and support** – from parents, aunties, uncles, grandparents and trusted others
- > **role models and mentors** – to look up to and guide them. This is really important at every age, especially for teenagers.



Children are watching and learning from you. Let them see you coping well and being positive about life.

## If things go wrong

We can't always stop things going wrong for our children, but if it happens we can:

- > help them work out what to do
- > make sure they get any help they need
- > let them have a go at dealing with things – but jump in when you need to
- > stick to routines as much as you can – it helps children feel safe
- > let teachers or carers know what's happening so they can support your child too.

## Children, stress and trauma

Children can be deeply affected by things like:

- > what they see on TV, eg wars, violence
- > negative media about Aboriginal people
- > family arguments or problems
- > hearing about things like stolen generation
- > illness, deaths in the family
- > racism or bullying
- > fires, floods, accidents
- > neglect – not getting the basic things they need
- > physical, emotional or sexual abuse
- > hearing, seeing or being the victim of violence.

Sometimes things that seem small to adults can stress children, especially if they feel powerless or are too young to understand what is going on.

## Signs of stress

Some signs children and teenagers might feel stressed are if they:

- > are very sad, anxious or angry
- > spend a lot of time alone
- > don't want to do things they usually enjoy
- > have problems with eating or sleeping
- > worry that the bad thing might happen again
- > use alcohol or drugs
- > are in trouble with the law.

## What you can do

When children experience difficult things talk with them about it and how they feel. Let them know it is not their fault and you are there for them. Get help from counsellors, teachers or health professionals.

**If a child or teenager is hurting themselves or talking about suicide get help straight away.**

## Staying strong yourself

When you look after yourself you are better able to help your children. Try to:

- > deal with any problems you have, including from the past
- > stay positive – focus on the strengths of your family and community
- > talk to someone you trust if you feel down
- > try not to drink too much or take drugs.



Being exposed to difficult situations does not 'toughen children up'. It causes trauma that can be very damaging.

## Services

### Helplines

**Parent Helpline:**

Phone 1300 364 100

For advice on child health and parenting

**Kids Helpline:**

Phone 1800 551 800, 24 hours

Telephone and web counselling for young people aged 5–25 years [www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

**Lifeline:**

Phone 13 11 14, 24 hours

Crisis support and suicide prevention

[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

**Youth Beyond Blue:**

Phone 1300 224 636, 24 hours

Speak to a mental health professional about how you feel no matter how big or small the problem

[www.youthbeyondblue.com](http://www.youthbeyondblue.com)

**Mensline:**

Phone 1300 789 978

Phone and online support and information service for men

[www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)

### Mental health

**Headspace:**

The National Youth Mental Health Foundation provides health advice, support and information to young people aged 12–25 years

[www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)

**Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS):**

8.45am–5pm, Mon to Fri

Free counselling services for children 0–15 years who are having difficulties with emotions, behaviour or the social areas of life.

You can contact CAMHS to talk about a referral to the service.

These are usually made through a doctor or other health professional. Talk to your doctor or health worker about the kind of help your child might need.

[www.wch.sa.gov.au/services/az/divisions/mentalhealth/index.html](http://www.wch.sa.gov.au/services/az/divisions/mentalhealth/index.html)

**Western Region**

> Port Adelaide Phone 8341 1222

**Eastern Region**

> Paradise Phone 8207 8999

**Northern Region**

> Elizabeth Phone 8252 0133

**Southern Region**

> Marion Phone 7425 8600

> Onkaparinga Phone 8326 1234

**Southern Country Services**

For information about a service near you

Phone 8326 1234 or 8391 3922

**Northern Country Services**

For information about a service near you

Phone 1800 819 089

**Mental Health Telephone Triage Service:**

Phone 13 14 65

Mental health assessment and crisis service, 24 hours a day

### Health

**Metropolitan Youth Health: MY Health**

9am–5pm, Mon to Fri

Free, confidential health services and support for young people 12–25 years

Angle Park: Phone 8243 5637

Elizabeth: Phone 8255 3477

Christies Beach: Phone 8326 6053

**Australian Indigenous Health Infonet:**

Information for parents and workers on a variety of Aboriginal topics [www.healthinfont.net.ecu.edu.au](http://www.healthinfont.net.ecu.edu.au)

**Drug and Alcohol Services South Australia (DASSA):**

Phone 1300 131 340

Confidential counselling and information

### Violence and child safety

**Domestic Violence Crisis Line:**

Phone 1800 800 098, 24 hours. If you are concerned for your safety or in urgent need of assistance. You can also be connected with Aboriginal support services if you wish

**1800 Respect:**

Phone 1800 737 732

National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service. Counselling helpline, information and support 24 hours, 7 days [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)

**Child Abuse Report Line:**

Phone 13 14 78, 24 hours

If you are worried a child is being abused or neglected.

You can ask to speak to an Aboriginal worker if available

### Mentoring

**Big Brothers Big Sisters and Connect-4 Group Mentoring:**

Phone 8203 9411

Matching adults with disadvantaged young people 7–17 years

[www.bigbrothersbigsisters.org.au](http://www.bigbrothersbigsisters.org.au)

**The Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME):**

Mentoring for Aboriginal high school and university students

[www.aimentoring.com/about/aime](http://www.aimentoring.com/about/aime)

**Panyappi Program (Mentoring Team):**

Metropolitan Aboriginal Youth and Family Services

Phone 8414 8900

Youth mentoring and crime prevention program for children

and young people 10–18 years

### Parenting

**Parenting SA:**

For more Parent Easy Guides [www.parenting.sa.gov.au](http://www.parenting.sa.gov.au)

**Raising Children Network:**

For parenting information [www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

#### Parenting SA

A partnership between the Department for Education and the Women's and Children's Health Network.

Phone (08) 8303 1660 • [www.parenting.sa.gov.au](http://www.parenting.sa.gov.au)

Parent Easy Guides are free in South Australia.

Important: This information is not intended to replace advice from a qualified practitioner.

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