

Parenting in Australia

English



Parents from all cultures and communities share a love of their children and want the best for them. There are many ways to raise children. Some of the ways children are raised in Australia may be new to you.

Parenting in a new culture

When you are a parent in a new culture you might find that:

- > life for your children is very different to when you were young
- > some things expected of parents are not what you are used to
- > you have less extended family support than before.

If you just want someone to talk to, or have worries or problems there are many people and services that can help. It can be good to know you are not alone.

Parents play an important role in helping children adapt to a new country. They teach family values and can help children learn, achieve, and stay connected to their culture.



Everyone in the family is getting used to life in a new culture. Working things out together can help keep families strong.

What the law says about parenting

Australian law allows parents to raise children by their own values and beliefs as long as children are safe and cared for.

Parents need to make sure children:

- > are safe from harm
- > have a place to live, food and clothes
- > go to school
- > have medical care
- > have financial support.

Parents are responsible for children until they are 18 years old. At 18 years of age, children are legally considered to be adults. Many continue living with their families.

Families in Australia

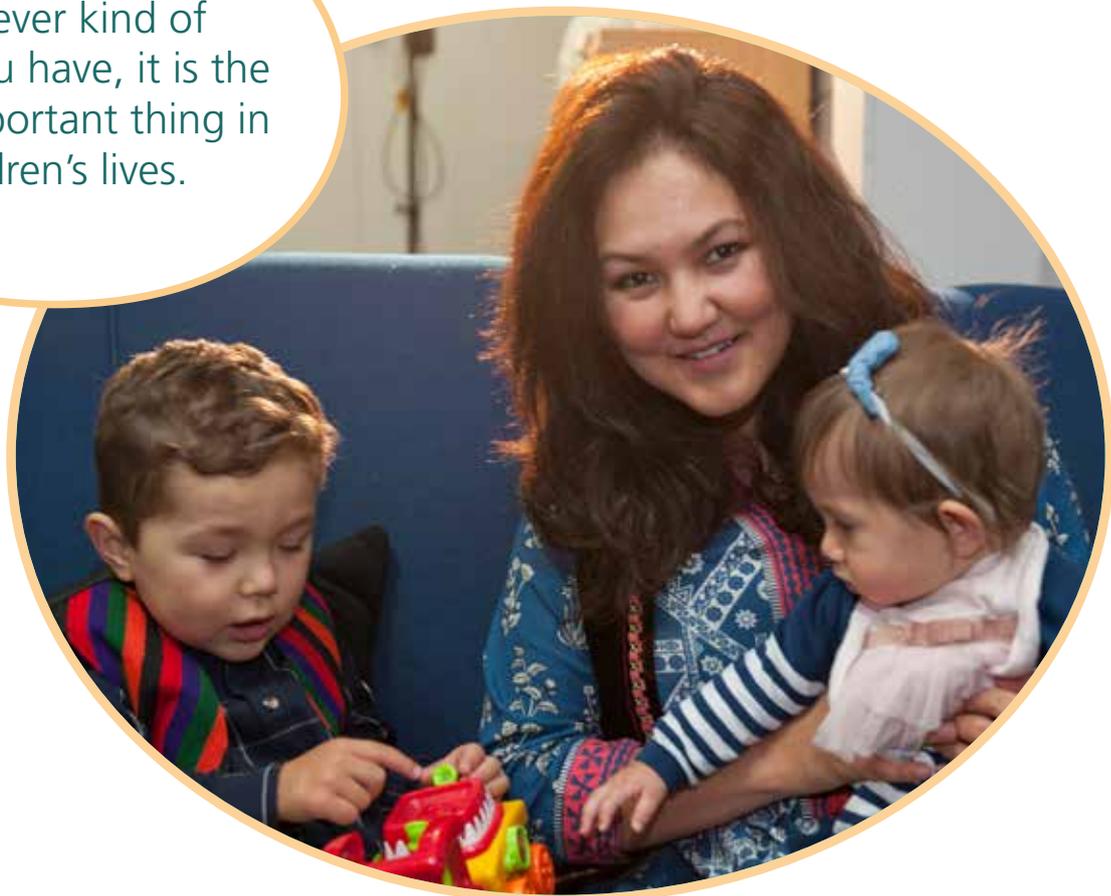
There are many types of families in Australia.

There are families with:

- > a mother, father and their children
- > one parent raising children
- > separated or divorced parents sharing parenting
- > adults and children from previous marriages living as one family
- > same sex parents – 2 women or 2 men and their children
- > grandparents or other adults raising children.

Some families are small. Others have many children or lots of relatives living together.

Whatever kind of family you have, it is the most important thing in children's lives.





Parents are important too. Try to take a break when you can, do things you enjoy, and look after your health.

Ways of parenting

There are many ways to raise children. Parents in Australia are encouraged to:

- > be kind and patient
- > spend time with children, talking, playing, having fun
- > guide children and help them learn
- > understand how children feel
- > have clear, reasonable family rules
- > get help if there is any concern.

Dads are also encouraged to:

- > be involved in caring for children from birth
- > respect their children's mum and all women in the family
- > protect children from family violence.

Parenting is easier when adults in the family work together to raise children.

Connecting with children

Having a good relationship with your children can make parenting easier. Some ways to build your relationship are to:

- > talk and listen to your children
- > eat meals together as a family
- > share household chores
- > celebrate good times
- > solve problems together
- > agree on family rules together, such as being kind and caring, no hitting, shouting or name calling; saying 'sorry', sharing and taking turns; the amount of time spent watching TV or using phones or other screens.

When children feel listened to, relationships are stronger.



Ideas for children's learning

There are many ways parents can help children learn. You could:

- > share books with them from birth - in English or another language, or tell stories from your culture
- > encourage them to play with lots of different things and be active outside
- > teach children to do things for themselves
- > show delight when they learn something new.

Children benefit from going to child care, playgroups and preschools from a young age. Children with disabilities are welcome at these services and schools. All children have the right to an education.

What about behaviour?

Parents are encouraged to be kind and patient as children learn the behaviour they expect.

It can help to:

- > explain what you want and why it is important
- > give children time to practise the behaviour
- > try to understand what could be causing any 'misbehaviour'
- > stay calm, even if you feel angry
- > talk with children and come up with solutions together.

Smacking or punishing children does not help them learn. They might obey but miss the chance to practise solving problems. Harsh physical punishment of children is against the law. There are services that can help if you have ongoing concerns.



Children learn from what parents do. Always behave the way you would like your children to behave.

Can children be taken away from parents?

Some parents worry that children might be taken away from them.

- > This is very rare.
- > It only happens if children are in serious danger of violence, abuse or neglect.
- > Services work with families to help them solve problems and keep children safe. It's best to get help early before things get worse.

Family violence

Family violence is a problem in all communities and cultures. It is never OK. It harms everyone in the family.

- > The stress harms children even if they don't see or hear the violence. Babies in the womb can be harmed too.
- > Children can't learn well or achieve the good things parents want for them.
- > Violence in the family makes it harder for adults to care for children.

If you use violence or have trouble with anger, there are services that can help.

Family violence is against the law in Australia.

Rights and responsibilities

Children can sometimes think they have more 'rights' in Australia. Parents can help them understand that any 'rights' come with responsibilities, including to:

- > show respect for family members and others
- > obey the law
- > keep themselves and others safe.

If children talk about their 'rights' in Australia, you can check the facts with a legal advice line or other service. You can ask for an interpreter.

Getting help

It's OK to ask for help if you need it. There are services that can help parents learn more about raising children or deal with any family concerns. Doctors, schools and services at the end of this Guide are good places to start.

Services

Emergency

000 Police, Fire, Ambulance
13 14 44 Police attendance if there is a problem but no immediate danger

Interpreters

Interpreting and Translating Centre

1800 280 203, 8.30am-5pm, Mon to Fri
Phone or face to face interpreters www.translate.sa.gov.au

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National)

13 14 50 any time day or night for phone interpreters
www.tisnational.gov.au

Parenting

Parent Helpline

1300 364 100 for advice on child health and parenting

Islamicare – Parenting Helpline

1800 960 009, 7 days a week
Confidential support for parents of teenagers <http://Islamicare.org.au>

Raising Children Network

Parenting information and videos in many languages
<http://raisingchildren.net.au>

Parenting SA

Other multicultural Parent Easy Guides and general Guides on a wide range of topics, including 'Being a parent', 'What is your parenting style?' www.parenting.sa.gov.au

Health and wellbeing

Refugee Health Service

8237 3900 or 1800 635 566 (country callers) 9am-5pm, Mon to Fri
21 Market Street, Adelaide
Health service for newly arrived refugees and asylum seekers

Healthdirect

1800 022 222 any time day or night if someone is sick or injured
www.healthdirect.gov.au

National Home Doctor Service

13 74 25 to book an after hours doctor home visit
<https://homedoctor.com.au>

Child and Family Health Service (CaFHS)

1300 733 606, 9am-4.30pm, Mon to Fri for an appointment
Free service for babies and young children aged 0-5 years.
Nurses can help with children's health, eating, sleeping and development
See www.cyh.com for child health and parenting information

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

8161 7198 or 1800 819 089 (country callers) 9am-5pm, Mon to Fri
Free counselling service for children aged 0-15 years
www.wch.sa.gov.au/camhs

Relationships Australia (Multicultural Services)

1300 364 277 or 1800 182 325 (country callers) 9am-5pm, Mon to Fri
Support for family relationships, children and teens, gambling, violence, HIV, hepatitis www.rasa.org.au

Education

Department for Education

Find your local government child care, children's centre, preschool or school
www.education.sa.gov.au

Playgroup SA

Find your local playgroup www.playgroupsa.com.au

Australian Government

Information on child care and preschools
Find your local centre www.mychild.gov.au

Legal

Legal Services Commission of SA

Advice Line 1300 366 424, 9am-4.30pm, Mon to Fri
Free legal advice www.lsc.sa.gov.au

Multicultural services

African Women's Federation of SA

8161 3331 or 8354 2951, 9am-5pm, Mon, Wed, Fri
304 Henley Beach Road, Underdale
Programs and services for African women www.awfosa.com

AMES Australia

7224 8550, 9am-5pm, Mon to Fri
Ground floor, 212 Pirie Street, Adelaide
7224 8500, 9am-5pm, Mon to Fri
2/59 Commercial Road, Salisbury
Settlement services for refugees and newly arrived migrants
www.ames.net.au/locations/find-sites

Australian Migrant Resource Centre

8217 9500, 9am-5pm, Mon to Fri
23 Coglein Street, Adelaide
Settlement, family relationships and family violence services for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
See www.amrc.org.au for metro and country locations

Australian Refugee Association

8354 2951, 9am-5pm, Mon to Fri
304 Henley Beach Road, Underdale
8281 2052, 9.30am-4.30pm, Mon to Fri
1 Brown Terrace, Salisbury
Assistance and support for refugees www.australianrefugee.org

Multicultural Youth SA (MYSA)

8212 0085, 9am-5pm, Mon to Fri
Shop 9 Miller's Arcade, 28 Hindley Street, Adelaide
Programs for young people and families www.mysa.com.au

Muslim Women's Association of SA

8212 0800, 9.30am-3pm, Mon to Fri
Level 4, 182 Victoria Square, Adelaide
Programs and support for Muslim women and their families
www.mwasa.org.au

Family violence

Domestic Violence Crisis Line

1800 800 098 any time day or night
Help with violence, emergency accommodation and referrals
<http://womenssafetyservices.com.au>

Migrant Women's Support Program

8152 9260, 8.30am-5pm, Mon to Fri
Free, confidential assistance for migrant women and children in family violence <http://womenssafetyservices.com.au>

1800 RESPECT

1800 737 732 any time day or night
Talk to someone by phone or online about family violence or sexual assault www.1800respect.org.au

This Parent Easy Guide is one of 9 developed by Parenting SA for families from new and emerging multicultural communities in South Australia. We would like to thank the many services and families that generously contributed their knowledge and expertise to the Guides, especially families and staff members whose photographs appear in them.

Parenting SA is a partnership of the Department for Education and the Women's and Children's Health Network.

Phone (08) 8303 1660

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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