

Strong families

English



Families are the most important thing in children's lives. Keeping your family strong can help everyone adapt to a new life in Australia.

Keeping families strong

In strong families, people:

- > help and support each other
- > show love and respect
- > talk and listen
- > look after their health
- > care about each other's feelings
- > solve problems together
- > celebrate good times
- > get help when needed.

Families coming to Australia may have experienced hardship or violence, or lost people or places they love. When family members feel safe and cared for, it can help them heal.

Strong families accept each other's differences. Everyone feels loved and respected.



Enjoying time together strengthens family relationships.

Women are often busy looking after others. Their health is important too.



Family health

Being healthy is important for everyone in the family. Some things that help are to:

- > eat healthy food
- > be active
- > get lots of sleep
- > protect skin from the sun
- > see a doctor if someone is sick. Ask about check-ups for women and men
- > get children checked too. Some have ear problems which can affect hearing, speech and learning
- > visit a dentist regularly. Most children can get free dental care
- > make sure everyone is immunised against diseases, especially children.

Healthy food

Eating healthy food can help prevent heart disease, obesity, diabetes and some cancers. These are big problems in Australia.

It's best to:

- > eat foods such as vegetables, lean meats, fish, rice, legumes, cereals, fruit, eggs, dairy
- > keep eating healthy foods from your culture
- > limit foods high in fat, salt or sugar, such as chips or lollies, even if children want them
- > drink plain tap water
- > breastfeed babies if you can.

Healthy pregnancy

If you are pregnant, it is best for baby if you:

- > see a doctor or nurse regularly
- > don't drink alcohol or smoke.

If you have had a baby and feel sad or worried, your doctor or nurse can help.

Smoking near pregnant women or young children harms their health. Doctors can help you stop smoking and improve your health.

Being active is great for the whole family. Go for walks, play in the park, do things you enjoy.

What about feelings?

Strong families care about feelings. Families coming to Australia can feel:

- > happy and excited about a new life
- > relieved to be safe
- > worried about people left behind
- > affected by the past, even when in a safe place.



Parents

Sometimes roles in the family change and this can cause stress.

- > Mums at home with children can feel alone, sad or tired, especially if they have little help from others.
- > Dads can feel frustrated or angry if there is no work. They may feel they have lost their role as provider or authority in the family, especially if women in the household are getting more money.
- > Some dads become more involved in parenting and this can take time for them to get used to.
- > Many parents don't have the extended family support they had before, and can feel alone.

Children

Children can feel stress and grief too. They can show their feelings in how they behave.

Children may:

- > become very quiet, afraid, angry or fight a lot
- > wet the bed, feel sick, have sleeping or eating problems.

These responses to stress are normal, and show that children need help from adults. If you are concerned about your child, talk with a doctor, their school or other service.

It takes strength to survive hardship, war, violence or losing loved ones. If anyone feels scared, in pain or alone, there are services that can help.

If anyone in the family seems sad, worried or angry, ask if they are OK.

Family violence

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

Violence can be:

- > physical, such as hitting, pushing, pinching, hair pulling
- > emotional, such as shaming, telling lies about someone
- > making threats, such as they will be deported, lose their children, about a dowry or other debts
- > keeping passports or other documents
- > not letting someone see family or friends
- > not respecting a person's culture or religion
- > controlling money or use of contraception
- > making someone do sexual things they don't want to do.

Violence can be used by husbands, wives, teenagers or extended family members. Most family violence is towards women and children.

Violence in the family makes it harder for adults to care for children.

How violence affects children

The stress of family violence harms children even if they don't see or hear it.

- > It affects how their brain works - they can't grow or learn as well.
- > They can feel scared and alone.
- > When they are at school, they can worry about what's happening at home.
- > Babies in the womb can be affected too.

If there is violence, let children know it is not their fault. Get any help and support they need.

There is no place for violence in a strong family. It is against the law in Australia.





Staying safe

It is important for you and your children to have a safety plan.

- > Work out where you will go if you don't feel safe.
- > Teach children how to contact people who will help them.
- > Teach them how to phone the Police on 000 if there is danger.

Why it can be hard to leave

It can be hard to leave family violence. Many people fear:

- > more violence towards themselves, their children or family overseas
- > losing their children
- > being blamed or rejected by their community
- > not being allowed to stay in Australia.

They may:

- > have nowhere to go, or anyone to help
- > feel afraid to contact a service, or not know about them, especially if English is not their first language.

It can help to know you are not alone. You could talk to trusted friends or family, or contact a service. It's best to do this before things get worse.

If you are using violence, there are services that can help you learn better ways. Violence is never the answer.

Contacting a service

Services are there to help you.

- > Your doctor, school or services at the end of this Guide are good places to start.
- > Many are free.
- > It doesn't matter what kind of visa you have.
- > You can get help if you are still living at home or have left the relationship.
- > It's OK to say 'No' to interpreters you don't feel comfortable with. You can ask for a telephone interpreter instead.

If you are worried about your visa, it is very important to get legal help. See free legal services at the end of this Guide.

Phone the Police on 000 if there is immediate danger. If you need an interpreter, keep saying your language, such as 'Dari, Dari, Dari' or 'Arabic, Arabic, Arabic'.

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

Health and wellbeing

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>

Kids Helpline

1800 551 800 any time day or night
Phone and online support for anyone aged 5-25 years
www.kidshelp.com.au

Lifeline

13 11 14 any time day or night if someone feels sad, worried or thinks they may harm themselves www.lifeline.org.au

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

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

Survivors of Torture and Trauma Assistance and Rehabilitation Service (STTARS)

8206 8900, 9am-5pm, Mon to Fri
81 Angas Street, Adelaide; 11 Wehl Street, Mt Gambier
For anyone affected by events such as war, violence, loss of loved ones before coming to Australia www.sttars.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

To get help with anger or violence

Domestic Violence Crisis Line

1800 800 098 any time day or night to be referred to a service

Relationships Australia

1300 364 277 or 1800 182 325 (country callers) 9am-5pm, Mon to Fri
Talk to someone about building strong families www.rasa.org.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

Northern Community Legal Service

8281 6911 or 1300 558 555 (country callers) 9am-5pm, Mon to Fri
26 John Street, Salisbury
Free legal information. Contact details for other areas at www.saccls.org.au/centres.php

Women's Legal Service SA

8221 5553 or 1800 816 349 (country callers) 10am-4pm, Mon to Fri
Free legal help for women www.wlssa.org.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

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

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 'Families that work well', 'Family violence'
www.parenting.sa.gov.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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