

Teenagers in Australia

English



The teenage years can bring joys and challenges for families from all cultures and communities. Sons and daughters are growing, changing and learning skills for adult life. There can be extra challenges for teenagers in a new culture.

Teenagers in a new culture

Teenagers coming to Australia face many changes. These could include:

- > learning about a new country and culture
- > speaking or learning a different language
- > sometimes translating for their family
- > getting used to a new school system
- > trying to fit in and make friends. This is very important to them.

Some teenagers may be affected by past hardship, violence or loss of people and places they love. They are also going through the big physical and emotional changes that happen to all teenagers during these years.

Teenagers can feel they are living between two cultures and face challenges in both. Parents have an important role in guiding teenagers and helping them learn to make good decisions for themselves.

The good news is that most teenagers adapt, learn and do well in Australia.



Parents and teenagers are getting used to life in Australia. Working things out together can help keep you close.

What parents can do

Teenagers are trying to work out how to belong in a new country. Parents can help by:

- > talking with them often and understanding what life is like for them in Australia
- > listening to their ideas and how they feel
- > helping them have friends. If you are not happy with their choices, explain why
- > supporting their learning at school
- > having clear and reasonable family rules
- > involving teenagers in family activities
- > helping them learn to solve problems
- > getting help from schools or other services when needed.

Making new friends and staying connected to family and culture helps teenagers stay strong.

Safety and health

Parents can help teenagers learn:

- > to use public transport and roads safely
- > about internet safety
- > to swim, and be safe at the beach, rivers, dams
- > to cook, clean and look after themselves
- > to eat well, be active, and get lots of sleep
- > about alcohol, drugs, safe sex, contraception and sexuality. If these are hard to talk about, help them find good information.

Make sure teenagers know how to get help when they need it, and have other trusted adults to talk to.

Teenagers need parents to help keep them safe. It is OK to say 'No' when you need to.



Conflict between parents and teenagers

Common causes of conflict include:

- > parents feeling teenagers are challenging their authority or losing their culture
- > teenagers seeing friends as having more freedom and wanting this too.

Some teenagers who speak more English than their parents may take advantage of them, such as misusing family money.

If there is conflict, it can help to:

- > stay calm - listen to how your son or daughter feels
- > listen to their ideas, even if you don't agree
- > solve problems together.

It is important to have limits that keep teenagers safe. Make sure these are reasonable and explain why they are important to you.

If teenagers don't do as expected, listen to their reasons and agree what will work better next time. This can be hard but be patient. Punishing teenagers might mean they obey but they miss the chance to practise solving problems. Harsh physical punishment is against the law.

If you feel angry, do things that help to calm you. You could agree to talk later when everyone is calm.

If teenagers 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.



Parents and teenagers are welcome to talk with teachers. They can help with many problems.

If there is violence

Everyone has the right to feel safe and respected, including parents. Some teenagers use violence towards family members, especially women. This is never OK in any community or culture. It is against the law in Australia. Violence may be:

- > physical, such as hitting, pushing
- > emotional, such as making threats, shaming
- > controlling what people do, who they see, or their access to money.

If this is happening:

- > there are services that can support parents and help teenagers learn better ways. Phone the Police on 000 if there is immediate danger
- > never use violence yourself.

Getting help

If you are concerned about your teenager, you can get help from doctors, schools or other services.

If your teenager has been affected by past events such as war, violence or hardship, there are services that can help.

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

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

Headspace
Talk face to face, by phone or chat online
Information, help and support for young people aged 12-25 years.
Find a Centre near you <https://headspace.org.au>

Beyond Blue
1300 224 636 any time day or night or chat online
Information and support if someone feels sad or worried
Information in many languages www.beyondblue.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

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

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

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

Safety

Child Abuse Report Line
13 14 78 any time day or night
If a child is at risk of violence, abuse or neglect including early or forced marriage or Female Genital Cutting
www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/reporting-child-abuse

Office of the eSafety Commissioner
1800 880 176
Online safety information for parents and children www.esafety.gov.au

SHINE SA Sexual Healthline
1300 883 793 or 1800 188 171 (country callers) 9am-12.30pm, Mon to Fri
Talk to someone about safe sex, contraception, sexuality or other sexual matters. Information in a number of languages www.shinesa.org.au

Alcohol and Drug Foundation
1300 858 584, 9am-5pm, Mon to Fri
Information about alcohol and drugs www.druginfo.adf.org.au

Teenagers
can be at risk of an
early or forced marriage or
female genital cutting. These
harm health and wellbeing and
are against Australian law.
Get help if someone is
at risk.

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 'Living with young people', 'Young people, feelings and depression', 'Young people, alcohol and drugs', 'Talking sex with young people' www.parenting.sa.gov.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

Multicultural services

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
Programs for teenagers and families 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

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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