

**Provide your child with love and support to develop their full potential.**



**Help your children reach all their dreams and goals.**

Provided by The Parent Education Team  
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**Positive Parenting Ideas  
Helping parents raise happy, resilient kids.**



**Starting School Is A Whole New World And A New Beginning.**

Michael Grose has some very helpful parenting tips to help us along our journey.

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## **Web sites -**

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

- information for parents from pregnancy to kids 16 years of age.

[www.childlike.com.au](http://www.childlike.com.au)

[www.parentingideas.com.au](http://www.parentingideas.com.au)

[www.chadd.org](http://www.chadd.org)

[www.schwablearning.org](http://www.schwablearning.org)

[www.wooldridges.com.au](http://www.wooldridges.com.au)

- resources for children's learning

[www.silvereye.com.au](http://www.silvereye.com.au)

- specific references for children and teens with special needs

[www.unicomeducation.com.au](http://www.unicomeducation.com.au)

- for anyone dedicated to serving the needs of students in the field of learning difficulties

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

- leaders in visual thinking and learning software

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

- internet site for K-8 teachers and kids

[www.michaelcarr-gregg.com](http://www.michaelcarr-gregg.com)

- an excellent resource for raising resilient children from 8-18 years of age

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

- a great way to put a daily dose of prayer in your life – with a smile!

**SERVICES**

**Parent Line**

**13 2055**

**(CONFIDENTIAL HELP FOR PARENTS)**

**Qualified counsellors on hand to help with: Behaviour, Emotional, Discipline, Baby, Toddler, Primary and Adolescent issues, Family Relationships, Sole Parent issues, School problems, Child care, Juvenile Justice, Child Health and safety issues.**

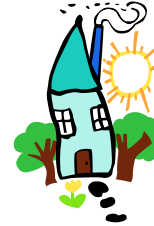
**Child Protection & Family Crisis Service 1800 066 777**

**Domestic Violence Line 1800 656 463**

**Kids Help Line 1800 551 800**

**Legal Aid Help Line 1800806913**

**Police 000**



**I dreamed I stood in a studio  
and watched two sculptors there.  
The clay they used was a young child's mind  
and they fashioned it with care.**

**One was a teacher- the tools he used  
were books and music and art;  
and one a parent-with a guiding hand,  
and a gentle loving heart.**

**Day after day the teacher toiled  
with a touch that was loving and sure  
while the parent laboured by his side  
and polished and smoothed it some more.**

**And when at last their task was done,  
they were proud of what they wrought.  
For the things they had put into the child  
Could neither be sold or bought**

**And each agreed he would have failed  
If he had worked alone,  
for behind the parent stood the school,  
and behind the teacher stood the home.**

## Talking With Kids

Talking with our children comes naturally and we don't often give a great deal of thought. It's something that we just do, like preparing breakfast or making lunches. However, the quality of our communication does make a difference. Good communication helps children shape positive attitudes about themselves, allows parents a window into their children's thinking and promotes good relationships.

### Bright Ideas



- ❖ Meals are great social occasions-more than just refuelling stops. They provide a great opportunity for families to get together and talk. Talk about each other's day –the highlights and low lights. Share your own day with your children.
- ❖ If you have a 'conversational clam' in your family try talking over a snack, or while doing an activity. Boys, in particular, tend to open up more while their hands are busy. Relax, go for a walk and watch how their tongues loosen up.
- ❖ If 'nah' or 'yep' are the only responses you get from your children consider questions that will spark more than a one- word response.
- ❖ Talk with children on their turf. Many children will open up in the privacy of their own bedroom, particularly when they feel relaxed and feel secure.
- ❖ Respect children's boundaries. There are times when a good listener will know when to keep quite. Children will often divulge information when they are ready.



### Talking Turn Offs

- ❖ Lecturing children: 'When I was young.....'
- ❖ Shouting: Using a quite voice is a more effective way to get a point across than a raised voice.
- ❖ Put-downs: They lower children's self-confidence and they turn children off listening to you.

## Help! My child is becoming an adolescent!

The transition or pre-pubescent period (between the ages of 10 and 14) is one of change, challenge and uncertainty for both children and parents. It is a period of tremendous physical growth when children become very self-conscious about their physical appearance. It is often a difficult period as they are no longer children yet they are not adolescents either. For some, saying goodbye to childhood can be sad and scary, while others can't wait to embrace the future.

### Bright Ideas



Parents too can be saddened by the end of childhood and may find it difficult to stand back and let go. In this period parents may have to change roles from being predominantly protectors of their children and learn to be supporters. It is also a time to control parenting rather than trying to control their child.

- ❖ Be sensitive about what you do and say to children at this age.
- ❖ Involve them in decision making about issues that concern them.
- ❖ Provide children with space for privacy so they can spend time alone to draw on their own resources. Bedroom etiquette such as 'a closed bedroom door is a sign that privacy is wanted' can help provide the space that children need during this stage.
- ❖ Create opportunities to spend time with your child on your own.
- ❖ Reinforce the attitude that they have control over the way they act, think and feel rather than being at the mercy of their emotions.
- ❖ During periods of transition children's self-confidence is often low so encourage your child as much as possible.
- ❖ Remember, in unstable and uncertain times what parents and children need most is each other.

## Helping Children deal with Fear

Many children have fears that surface at various times in their lives. Some, such as fear of the dark, are common in children at certain ages. Sometimes fears are triggered by an event or an unfortunate accident. If a child is bitten by a dog when young, he or she may be afraid of all dogs. Well-publicised tragedies such as the Port Arthur massacre can lead to a deep feeling of fear and anxiety about their personal safety. Children can also learn fears from adults. Especially going to the dentist.



### Bright Ideas

- ❖ Distinguish between caution and fear. Fear can be debilitating as it generally leads to an avoidance of a situation and it diminishes the ability to cope.
- ❖ Investigate the source of the fear by listening to your child. Give them permission to express their feelings.
- ❖ Reassure them by telling them the truth. For instance, you cannot guarantee that a child will be totally safe but there are steps to take to reduce the likelihood of harm. Children's security comes from routines and established rituals, so make sure that there are few changes as possible in their lives particularly following a trauma.
- ❖ Teach them the skills to cope. Children who are afraid of the dark often feel better knowing that they can turn on a night-light.
- ❖ Display confidence in your child's ability to deal with fears. Just as children easily pick up parental anxiety they also learn optimism from their parents. It is amazing how catching a positive attitude is!
- ❖ Find someone to talk to about your children's fears. Swap ideas to reassure yourself that you have acted in your child's best interests.

## Working and Parenting

Work rather than family structure or number of children is the common denominator for most Australian families. In over half of dual-parent families with dependent children both parents work: while just under half of sole parents work. The increase of women into the workforce has impacted families in a number of ways. The traditional division of labour where father was the breadwinner and mother was responsible for raising children is slowly breaking down. All aspects of parenting are now being shared more evenly than in the past. Even so, many fathers are unsure of their roles within their families. The greatest challenge for working parents is to achieve a long-term balance between work, family and their own personal and social lives.



### Bright Ideas

- ❖ Sole parents need to build up a network of support including friends and relatives with whom they can share the load.
- ❖ One of the secrets to successfully working and raising a family is to share the load with your partner, friends and relatives. One of the benefits of working parents is that their children often develop independence earlier than other children.
- ❖ Learn to use the best time management tool there is-say no. Get into the habit of saying no to those who make unrealistic demands on your time and take you away from the important areas of your life.

## Encouraging Children

If we, as parents, continually encourage our children we can have a deep and positive effect on them. The messages that we send them do stay in their minds and influence the way they think about themselves and how they behave. If we let children know often enough that they are inept or inadequate they will believe it, as we are significant reference points. Through the use of constant encouragement parents can promote self-confidence in their children as learners and as people.

### Bright Ideas



- ❖ Give children realistic responsibility. Through our actions we are giving them the message: 'I know that you can do this'.
- ❖ Point out children's strengths and achievements. When correcting a child or pointing out an error, try focusing on a strength first.
- ❖ Recognise improvement they have made or effort they are putting in at school or home.
- ❖ Express your confidence and faith in their abilities. I know you can do it.
- ❖ Promote positive self-talk. When children do something well ask them how they feel about their efforts.
- ❖ If you need a reminder to encourage your child-consciously develop the habit of offering a positive remark when they go for school in the morning and when say good night.



### How to discourage children

- ❖ Compare them with a sibling: "Why can't you keep your bedroom tidy like your sister?"
- ❖ Continually criticise or put them down: 'You are a real dope!'
- ❖ Focus on their mistakes and errors: 'Oh no! You've made a mistake again. How many times do I have to remind you?'

## Fathers Are Parents Too!

The place of fathers in the development of children is finally being recognised by many experts. For decades mothers were seen as the main event with fathers being a support act in the raising of children. Men were traditionally the providers and responsible for the heavy discipline while mothers did most of the caring and nurturing of children.

### Bright Ideas



- ❖ Fathers are the kings of play.
- ❖ Involve yourself in all areas of parenting. The children will not only enjoy seeing you involved but having their father's direct influence on their lives can be hugely beneficial.
- ❖ Learn about children from your own kids. By listening, watching and talking with them men can learn a great deal about parenting and meeting their children's needs.
- ❖ Keep in touch with children during busy periods at work. Phone them when you are working back late or say hello by putting a note in their lunch box.
- ❖ Provide emotional support for your partner by discussing the difficulties and joys of raising children.
- ❖ If you are the breadwinner and your partner is an at home mother provide her with a break from her regular duties.

## Swearing

Children swear for many reasons:

To experiment with language; to attract your attention; to make themselves appear bigger or older than they are; and even as a challenge or expression of personal power. Swearing needs to be considered as a form of language- albeit an unacceptable one. This is not to say that you condone it. Rather, it is an acceptance of the fact that your children will hear many forms of unacceptable language and they need to understand its use and purpose. Like other forms of unacceptable language children need to learn that there are times and places when its use is unacceptable or causes distress to others.



### Bright Ideas

- ❖ Avoid over reacting when children swear. However, make the message clear that you are unimpressed with swearing and you are swearing and you are willing to leave them alone when they swear at you.
- ❖ Discuss the concept of appropriate language with older children. Teach them that they need to learn to control their use of language and adjust it to suit the situation they are in.
- ❖ Children like adults, can use inappropriate language out of habit. If this is the case make up alternative words that replace swearing.
- ❖ Try the penalty system. When family members swear they are fined an agreed amount, which can be spent in a way that helps others.
- ❖ Examine your own choice of language to judge if it is an acceptable model for your children.

## Beating the Bedtime Blues

Bedtime can be a battle in many families as children resist attempts to end their day and allow parents to have some time to themselves. Some children are experts at stretching bedtime out through procrastination or persist cries of 'five more minutes because this is my favourite show'. They may suddenly remember that homework is due the next day. Anything to put off bedtime! A clear plan can help make the end of the day less of a chore for parents.



### Bright Ideas

- ❖ Distinguish between being in bed and being in the bedroom. Children differ in the amount of sleep they need- so expect them to go to sleep at a certain time is unrealistic. However they can be expected to be in their bedrooms at a set time and then regulate their own sleep habits.
- ❖ Have a set routine such as 'quite time, drink and story', which signals the end of the day, and stick to it. Even older primary school children benefit from a set routine that lets them know what is expected so they can plan accordingly.
- ❖ Be firm and resist procrastination. Try always to say good night at the appointed time even if children are not quite ready.
- ❖ Turn the television off and, if necessary.
- ❖ Return jacks-in-the-boxes to their bedrooms and ignore repeated calling out. Don't be drawn into a game of children's making.



### How to ensure the blues continue

- ❖ Over-stimulate children before bedtime.
- ❖ Allow children who delayed bedtime to sleep in to make up for lost sleep.

This will ensure that they stay awake at night. (Wake children at the same time each morning.)

## Discipline

Discipline is a necessary part of parenting, yet it is often misunderstood. It is usually associated with punishment - smacking, humiliation and other types of censuring action. Effective discipline teaches children about appropriate behaviour. Good discipline encourages them to take responsibility for their own actions. It doesn't involve physical harm or verbal put - downs. However, it does require firmness and a willingness to treat children with respect, even if they don't always respond to us in kind.



### Bright Ideas

- ❖ Try the ESCAPE formula when dealing with children's misbehaviour.
- ❖ Establish clear limits and boundaries for children. Rules need to be clear and specific. 'Be home by six o'clock 'is more effective than don't be late'.
- ❖ Stop, think and go against your first impulse when children misbehave. If you feel like losing your cool with your children take a walk, phone a friend or even count to ten before interacting with them.
- ❖ Cue children once when giving instructions or directions. Repeated requests or threats only encourage 'parent deafness' in children.
- ❖ Act when children don't stick to the limits or refuse to cooperate. Rather than nag or coax children into doing the right thing implement a consequence that is related to their misbehaviour .e.g. Children constantly coming home late can stay home next time and toys being left around get taken for a while.
- ❖ Pinpoint the reason for the children's behaviour. If you constantly nag children at bedtime and argue with determined teenagers - try changing the way you respond.
- ❖ Encourage children at every opportunity. Children who are difficult to deal with generally lack self-confidence and doubt their self-worth so they need constant encouragement. Remember, consistency rather than severity is the key to effective discipline.

## Helping With Homework

Home or after schoolwork is a common expectation for most primary aged children. The nature of the activities will vary between different school and for different school and for different ages so it is best to discuss expectations with your child's teacher. While requirements may vary most educators agree that reading is the most valuable homework a child can do and should become a daily habit. Parents can help children develop sound study habits from a young age which include establishing a predictable routine, encouraging effective use of time and helping them to be organised.



### Bright Ideas

- ❖ If homework is done at the same time each night, getting started is usually less of an issue.
- ❖ Make homework time as enjoyable as possible. When sharing a book make yourself comfortable.
- ❖ Establish a good working environment for students. Make sure they have a quiet area away from distractions that is well lit and with good ventilation. A table or a desk makes a good workspace, although don't be surprised if they spread their work out all over the kitchen table. Some children just love to be around others.
- ❖ Encourage children to work reasonably quickly and efficiently. A little work each night is more productive than packing it all into one weekly session.
- ❖ Keep explanations simple. If you become upset or frustrated and the atmosphere becomes tense, stop helping.
- ❖ Be realistic and don't expect to solve all homework difficulties. When in doubt send a note to your child's teacher letting him or her know the problem. They will appreciate being informed.



## Family Meetings

If your children continually argue with each other or just never seem to get along consider holding regular family meetings. They require some work and commitment at the start but it is worth persevering to achieve harmony in the family. Regular meetings give children a chance to have some input into the way the family operates as well as providing a forum for airing grievances. They also give parents a chance to influence the way that children deal with difficulties among themselves.

### Bright Ideas



- ❖ Family meetings can be used to:
  - allocate chores
  - resolve conflicts and assist with individual problems
  - discuss family routines and procedures
  - plan for fun things such as outings and holidays
- ❖ Begin each meeting on a positive note.
- ❖ Avoid overloading the meetings with too many matters to discuss. Two or three items are usually enough.
- ❖ Family meetings are not gripe sessions. "We have a problem with ....., ' rather than 'You children always...'. "
- ❖ If the formality of a family meeting is not for you, then discussing things regularly as a family group is an excellent alternative.

## Bullying

Bullying is the selective, uninvited, intentional, often repetitive oppression of one person by another person or group. Whether physical or psychological, bullying is an intolerable behaviour that can cause long-term harm to children. It not only transgresses a child's fundamental right to feel safe but can affect academic performance, peer group relations and a child's self-esteem.

What to do if you suspect your child is being bullied?

### Bright Ideas



- ❖ Discuss the processes that will be used to help your child and the bullies. Note what the school will do and what you can do to support your child.
- ❖ Look for warning signs of bullying. These include: complaints about items being stolen, evidence of physical injury such as bruising, reluctance to go to school, feigned illnesses or headaches, or withdrawal from school activities.
- ❖ If you suspect your child is being bullied take him or her seriously and avoid dismissing complaints as tale telling. Children who are bullied need someone to believe their story. Sometimes the only thing children want is the knowledge that they have their parents' full support.
- ❖ Avoid over-reacting and resist the temptation to confront the bullies and give them a dose of their own medicine.
- ❖ Get a clear picture of what happens, who is involved and what your child is doing before being bullied.

*Inform your child's school of the bullying behaviour. Present your concern to the principal or relevant teacher and explain that you are hoping to find a solution to the problem with the school's help.*

## Promoting Independence

The main task for parents is to raise responsible, independent children-this can be tough because our natural instinct is to care for and nurture them. However, parents shouldn't wait until children are ready to leave home before they give them responsibility. Training for independence needs to start from a young age and continue into teenage years. Encouraging independence in children is not just good training for adulthood. When we teach our children to do jobs for themselves we demonstrate our faith in them and send a powerful message that they are capable. Our actions definitely speak louder than words.

## Morning Madness

Mornings are often chaotic, particularly in households where both parents work or in the homes of sole parents. Both parents and children have a great deal to do to prepare for the day.

Attention seekers and dawdlers often find mornings an ideal time to keep parents busy. Many morning difficulties arise due to a lack of clear understanding of the roles to be performed. Most children, even young ones, are capable of doing their morning tasks without parental interference, yet we so often take those responsibilities away from them.

### Bright Ideas



- ❖ Encourage them to take responsibility for their own homework tasks. Put children in charge of reading and get them to remind you that it is reading time.
- ❖ Encourage children to do routine household and family activities.
- ❖ Children can do quite difficult tasks if we show them how.
- ❖ When children can tell the time teach them how to use an alarm clock so they can get themselves up and regulate their own morning routine.
- ❖ Be alert to children's readiness and willingness to do things for themselves then consider letting your child take over.
- ❖ Show older children how to operate the washing machine and the microwave.
- ❖ The most effective way to promote responsibility in children is to give them responsibility.

### Bright Ideas



- ❖ Establish a clear routine.
- ❖ Children should be able to do tasks that directly involve them, such as preparing their cereal, clearing dishes away, dressing, washing themselves and preparing school bags.
- ❖ Be aware of distractions such as television, if it is to be watched, can be turned on when children are ready for the day. Clothes can be chosen and laid out the night before.
- ❖ Avoid covering for children's misbehaviour. If you are suffering due to their refusal to cooperate, then put the responsibility for the misbehaviour where it should be – with the children. Allow them to experience the consequences of being late to school or even having to dress at school.

## Pocket Money

Recent research shows that Australian children are generally good savers. They don't all squander their pocket money on toys, sweets and other treats, as may have been believed. Nearly 50 per cent of 7 to 12 year-olds have accumulated over \$100 in savings which is excellent considering allowances are usually \$3 to \$5 per week range. Regular pocket money gives children some independence and allows them to regulate their own financial affairs without continually asking their parents for money. Pocket money helps remove some of the pressure to buy that children exert on parents.

### Bright Ideas



- ❖ Pay children pocket money on a regular basis so they can plan ahead and budget. Give them coins- this allows them to immediately allocate money for different purposes.
- ❖ Encourage them to set aside some coins for saving rather than saving the money left over.
- ❖ Ensure banking day follows payday which makes saving easier.
- ❖ Keep pocket money and behaviour separate. It is not a good idea to use allowances as rewards or bribes for good behaviour.
- ❖ Consider providing older children with a considerable sum which can cover such items as fashion clothing, lunch money, fares and other recurring costs.
- ❖ Encourage children to establish savings goals. Show them that they can purchase an expensive item by putting a little aside each week.

## Developing Self-esteem

Children's feelings of self-worth or self-esteem influence their happiness, success at school and the way they relate with others. Their self-esteem is influenced by their experiences of success and the messages they receive from those around them. Children with a healthy level of self-esteem usually take sensible risks and extend themselves more, as they have a realistic view of mistakes. Failure doesn't reflect on them personally, they are still IK and they won't fall apart when things don't go their way. Children with healthy self-esteem tend to be more resilient and cope better with problems and any changes that may occur.

### Bright Ideas



- ❖ Develop independence in children. Allow children to do things for themselves as soon as they are able.
- ❖ Celebrate children's efforts and achievements in an enjoyable way. Have a display space at home for schoolwork, art and awards they have received. Change the display frequently.
- ❖ Send frequent positive messages to children. Focus on their strengths rather than criticising weaknesses and continually pointing out misbehaviour.
- ❖ Value your children's ideas, thoughts and opinions. Listen to them and help them to express their feelings and thoughts. Accept rather than reject their ideas even though you may disagree with them.
- ❖ Help children experience success by breaking complex tasks into achievable goals. Eg. A young child can learn to make a bed by first arranging teddies, smoothing the doona and progressing from there.
- ❖ Teach children to establish realistic goals. Eg. If they wish to learn to cook they may set out to learn ten recipes a year. Help them make up a plan of action to achieve their goals.

## Helping at Home

Children are generally happiest when they can contribute to their own and their family's well-being. Family life is full of give and take – which means sharing the jobs as well as the fun. It is realistic to expect children to help out at home. In fact, when children feel that they belong to their family through positive contribution they are less likely to find their place through misbehaviour. Many parents, however, have difficulty getting their children to help. Some spend so much time nagging children to do jobs that they often give up asking and expect little of them. There is no need to overburden children with jobs, but a sensible allocation of chores according to their age, study requirements and interests is not only good training but a great help for parents as well.



### Bright Ideas

- ❖ Give children realistic jobs rather than tasks that simply keep them busy.
- ❖ Balance the personal chores with family jobs. Involve children in choosing their jobs. Rotate the unpleasant tasks frequently.
- ❖ Place the more arduous or difficult tasks on a roster. The children can refer to it when needed, which takes the load off you and removes the need to remind them.
- ❖ Ensure jobs are completed before mealtimes and pleasant activities such as watching television.
- ❖ Avoid doing jobs for children. When children get the message that no one will do their jobs for them they will be more likely to help out.
- ❖ Show your appreciation for their help. Let them know that their contribution to the family is valued. If you do it often enough they may even show their appreciation for your help in return!
- ❖ Keep chores and pocket-money separate. It is a reasonable expectation that children should help around the house without expecting a reward.
- ❖ The term 'chore' definitely has an image problem. Mention the word and children turn up their nose in horror. Try using a different term.

## Supermarket Shopping

Supermarkets of all places to shop in can bring out the worst in kids. They are open and spacious with shelves full of potential missiles. Even the trolleys are hazardous - they make great substitutes for billycarts. Supermarkets also offer a huge potential for promoting children's language and maths skills. They are full of goods of all shapes and sizes, with letters and numbers everywhere. With a little planning, shopping can be enjoyable and educational - the trick is to keep children busy and encourage them to help.



### Bright Ideas

- ❖ Give young children simple tasks. Encourage them to find the products that they use. Your directions can teach a great deal about colours, numbers, letters and words. For example: 'Can you find me the jar with the red lid, please?' 'Pass me the biggest tub of ice-cream, please?' 'Which jar is the heaviest?'
- ❖ They can help compile a shopping list. Let them buy the things they have listed sticking to a budget.
- ❖ Encourage them to plan and cook a meal.
- ❖ Ask children to select things for you, comparing price, weight and value.
- ❖ They can use a calculator to add up the prices as you shop.
- ❖ They can identify 'specials' in a supermarket catalogue and help you select them as you shop.

## Television

Television is both a boon and a curse for parents. Its use has been widely researched and found to have both positive and negative effects on children's behaviour, language and attitudes. It is widely criticised for not only being used as a baby-sitter, but for keeping children away from more active or educational activities. Television does have its good points. It is entertaining, relaxing and offers programs high in educational content. Television itself is not the problem, rather the way it is used. The key is to be selective in the programs that children watch.

## Sibling Rivalry

Children who are close in age or adjacent in birth order often compete with each other for parental recognition. Competition is shown through constant fighting, criticising and telling tales; it can be destructive to family harmony. Competitive siblings generally display different personalities and interests and excel in different areas. If one child is an able student the other may excel in sport or music. If one is responsible the rival may be irresponsible. Excessive sibling rivalry is a sign of discouragement-children adopt certain behaviours to show that they can be better, or get more attention, than a sibling. As competitive children will often not try to succeed in an area where a sibling is successful, rivalry places limits on children's potential.

### Bright Ideas

- ❖ Place reasonable, sensible limits on television use. A weekly maximum of 10-12 hours viewing is highly recommended. Restrict your own viewing as well. Keep the television OFF. Only turn it on to watch a program.
- ❖ Encourage children to choose a program from the TV guide before turning the television on.
- ❖ From time to time children should keep a weekly record or diary of the programs they watch. Encourage them to record their thoughts or reactions.
- ❖ Have a television – free day once a week and try alternative forms of entertainment such as games, reading and so on.
- ❖ Teach children the ratings system.
- ❖ Sit with children and discuss what they have seen, including the commercials.

### Bright Ideas

- ❖ Accept each child's uniqueness and value their differences. Help children to understand that they can achieve in their own ways.
- ❖ Encourage children to take an interest in each other's activities.
- ❖ Ensure the acceptance of children is not conditional upon success.
- ❖ Emphasise children's effort rather than praise them for good results. Excessive praise often leads to sibling rivalry.
- ❖ Stay out of children's disputes. Children often argue to involve their parents so bear it or boot them out when they have disagreements.



### Three ways to promote rivalry

- ❖ Constantly praise one and criticise the others
- ❖ Interfere in their disputes
- ❖ Compare one child with another

## Helping Children Learn

Children's first teachers are their parents and their first classroom is the family home. When a child begins school, the importance of a parent's teaching role doesn't diminish – it is supplemented by a more formal approach to learning. While children may learn skills and knowledge in new ways, the place of parents in their children's education is still as crucial as ever.

### Bright Ideas



- ❖ Stay in contact with your child's classroom teacher and follow his or her individual guidelines regarding helping at home.
- ❖ Set aside a regular time for homework and other educational activities. Even if no formal work is set, this time can be used for reading or another learning activity appropriate to your child's age.
- ❖ Read regularly with your children and make it fun. It is not so much whether children can read but whether they do read that is significant. Let children see you reading books, newspapers and magazines. Make sure they see both mum and dad browsing, selecting and talking about books.
- ❖ Promote self-confidence in your children as learners by valuing their efforts and encouraging them to 'have a go'.
- ❖ Make the most of the informal learning opportunities that occur all the time at home. Cooking a meal, driving a car, even chopping wood can promote their language and maths abilities. 'That wheelbarrow must hold about 100 kilograms of wood!'
- ❖ Provide children with a broad range of experiences that they can talk and write about at school. Activities don't have to be expensive. A walk along the beach at low tide is fun, a wonderful learning experience and costs nothing.
- ❖ Encourage children to feel capable, independent and responsible – by promoting these feelings you are helping them to cope at school and this promotes learning.
- ❖ Establish realistic expectations for children and don't be disappointed if they make mistakes when they learn. Mistakes are part of learning and improving.

## Sharing

Children should be encouraged to share time, space and possessions from the earliest possible age. Sharing is an important element in forming friendships and is a prerequisite for living and working effectively with others. It is a vital skill for social and academic success at school. Parents can stimulate children to share by establishing a cooperative atmosphere at home. There are many situations in family-life that can be used to foster cooperation and sharing.

### Bright Ideas



- ❖ When serving sandwiches, place them on a large plate for everyone to share. Allow children to serve themselves.
- ❖ Use family discussions to teach children to take it in turns speaking and listening to others which is an important social skill.
- ❖ Provide games and toys for the whole family to share. The rules of board games provide a good structure for children to follow.
- ❖ Limit children's time at solitary activity such as television and computers.
- ❖ Encourage interaction with other children through outdoor or indoor games.
- ❖ Promote a sense of generosity by encouraging children to swap or give away old toys.
- ❖ Share television time with other members of the family.
- ❖ Provide an opportunity for a child who has difficulty sharing to occasionally play with younger children or even toddlers. It is often hard to avoid sharing with younger children.



### Talk About Sharing

When you are with your children talk to them about sharing. It is OK not to share sometimes (treasured possessions).

## Taming the Tantrums

Temper tantrums are used by children of all ages to get what they want or to demonstrate their disapproval over a changed situation. They are a form of emotional blackmail that is very effective in achieving children's objectives. Temper tantrums require an audience-the bigger the better, so supermarkets and other public places make great places where children can throw a 'wobbly'. Children may throw a tantrum in their bedrooms, too, but they are loud enough for parents to hear.

## Attention Seeking

Attention seeking is the most common type of misbehaviour in children. It can take many forms eating problems, clowning, the walking question mark, constant interruptions, showing-off and whining. Attention-seekers want to keep their parents busy or keep them in their service. They are usually very effective as attention-seeking behaviour is hard to ignore. Parents often unknowingly encourage children's attention seeking behaviour by constantly responding to it.

### Bright Ideas



- ❖ Be firm and refuse to be blackmailed by your children's outbursts. Giving in sends a message that tantrums work if children cry loud and long enough.
- ❖ When a tantrum begins, move away. Don't try and reason with a child in the middle of a tantrum. Go into another room or even outside. If the tantrum is in public, either move away (still close enough for supervision) or quietly remove him or her from the scene.
- ❖ Following a tantrum, talk about better ways that your child could act to get his or her needs met. Rehearse what they could do next time, even practising what they could say. This type of behaviour rehearsal can be very effective.
- ❖ Provide a safe alternative for children who want to display their anger e.g. exercise, hitting a ball or even quite relaxation can help.
- ❖ Talk about these alternatives with your child.
- ❖ You cannot stop children from displaying their anger, but you can, however, control your own reactions. By remaining calm and refusing to give in to temper tantrums, you are sending a powerful message: "I will not be blackmailed by such behaviour. I shall respond positively to you when you calm down."

### Bright Ideas



- Ignore attention-seeking behaviour as much as possible. If necessary, correct a child, but in a low-key manner to give him or her a minimum of attention.
- Provide lots of positive attention-play, talk, encourage, value their contributions and achievements. In the absence of positive attention, children, will settle for second best-negative attention such as nagging or even punishment. At least you know they are around!
- Help attention-seekers feel useful. Let them know that they don't have to resort to cheap tricks to gain a sense of belonging in their family. Spend time with them. Enjoy their company. Read, play, chat or just relax together.
- Catch children being good. Children need to get the message that cooperative behaviour gets them more attention than negative behaviour.
- At times some children may feel neglected or think that a brother or sister is receiving all your attention. If this happens plan to have some one-on-one time with each child. Develop a special interest that you share with each child in your family so you have something in common.



## Bright Ideas **(primary and secondary)**

### ❖ Making the most of the holidays

- Money can't buy happiness, but loving family relationships can create it. Have a television free day. Join in playing board games or card games, listen to or play music, share a book or swap stories. Make the alternative activities so good that the kids look forward to the 'games' day. American family researcher John DeFrain has found that the happiest childhood memories that adults hold are activities experienced as a family and the simple inexpensive activities.

### ❖ Helping Children make Friends

- Teach your child or young person to start up a conversation with someone else. The earliest way to start a conversation is to ask about the other person and then listen. As children grow and develop we can encourage a variety of friendships skills and talk with them about friendship difficulties and that they may encounter. There are five positive attributes that adults can model when they interact with children: Acceptance, Attention, Appreciation, Affirmation, Affection.

### ❖ Family rituals and traditions

- Make sure that family members acknowledge each other and say 'good morning' and 'good night' every day.

### ❖ One-on-one time

- Children and young people generally enjoy spending one-on-one time with a parent. It makes them feel special and helps develop relationship. Research shows that one-on-one time promotes family memories.

### ❖ Helping kids to be positively optimistic

- Looking on the bright side. Teach children to look on the bright side by challenging them to look for a positive side of every negative situation or disappointment. It is good practise for both kids and adults.

### ❖ Helping children talk about their feelings

- Reveal your own story. When your child is going through a difficult time or stage talk about similar situations that happened in your life when you were young. It can be reassuring for a child or teenager to know that someone else has gone through a similar situation and felt the same way and survived!

### Resilient kids are resourceful kids

- When children come to you with a problem or minor difficulty that you know they can handle invite them to apply their R & I – their Resourcefulness and Initiative. Like everything else their R&I needs to be exercised if it is to develop.

### ❖ Discipline without tears, fears or put downs

- If your child or young person likes to have their own way focus on yourself rather than continually telling them what they should do. "I am serving up the meal now", rather than "Come on sit down, turn off the TV" causes less resistance and leads to greater cooperation from young power-seekers.

### ❖ Reading your students report

- Many children, especially boys respond favourably to short-term goals. General requests such as "improve that spelling" or "spend more time practising..." are often lost on young learners. Reaching a short-term goal is a tremendous motivator for anyone!

### ❖ Nuke the negative

- Teach your child or young person to dispute negative views they have of themselves or others. Help them see the irrational nature of statements such "I am Hopeless". Challenge such negative statements and encourage children to do the same.

### ❖ Helping children achieve success

- Help children achieve success in even difficult areas by breaking complex skills or activities into achievable goals. And remember, kids need heaps of encouragement if they are to achieve success.

### ❖ Boosting self esteem with encouragement

- Do you encourage your child three times a day. Every child needs someone in his life who says, "I know you can do this".