

# PARENTING

The most important job in the world

Being a parent

Families that work well

Stepfamilies

Bedwetting

Grandparenting

Grief and loss

Self esteem

Being a dad

Single parenting

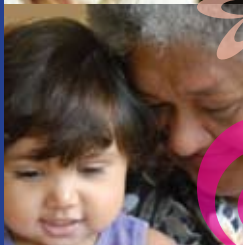
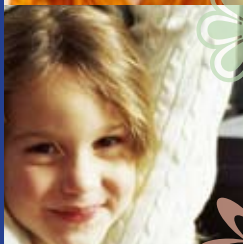
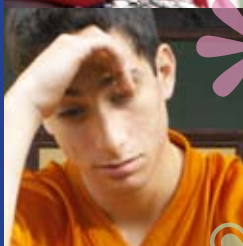
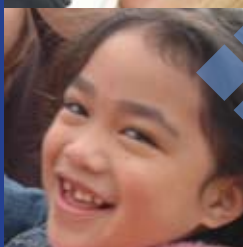


NSW Department of  
Community Services

[www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)

## Contents

- 3** Being a parent
- 6** Families that work well
- 7** Stepfamilies
- 8** Being a dad
- 10** Bed wetting
- 11** Grief and loss
- 12** Single parenting
- 13** Grandparenting
- 15** Self esteem



This magazine has been produced by the Media and Communication Branch of the NSW Department of Community Services.

### Acknowledgements

The information in this magazine has been adapted from material provided under an agreement with Parenting SA.

Models are used throughout the magazine unless otherwise stated.

In this magazine 'he' and 'she' is used in turn. Please change to suit your child's sex if you prefer.

© DoCS March 2009

ISBN: 1 74190 074 3

NSW Department of Community Services

[www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)

To report a child at risk of harm, ring the DoCS 24 hour Helpline **132 111**

All rights reserved. Except as provided in the *Copyright Act 1968* (Commonwealth), no use of this work which is within the exclusive right of the copyright owner may be made. No part of this work may be reproduced, translated, modified, reduced, transmitted or stored in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system without prior written permission of the NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS).

Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction and rights are welcome and should be addressed to Media and Communication, NSW Department of Community Services, Locked Bag 4028, Ashfield NSW 2131. While every care has been taken in the preparation of *Parenting* and the information it contains is believed to be accurate, DoCS suggests that professional advice be sought where necessary. DoCS cannot be liable for any error, omission or for damages arising from the supply, performance or use of this material and makes no warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied in relation to it.



NSW Department of  
Community Services



New South Wales  
Government

# Being a parent

**Becoming a parent is one of the most challenging and rewarding tasks in life. It's a huge responsibility that's often taken for granted.**

**It's important to remember that parents grow into their roles, and can't expect to have the right answers all the time!**

## Your feelings

As a parent you will feel all sorts of emotions. You will feel love, joy and pride, but also anger, panic, despair and frustration. Sometimes parents feel they are not appreciated by their children or valued by others.

It's normal for parents to sometimes feel tired or upset and question what it's all about. Remember you don't have to be perfect, all parents feel they make mistakes at times.

## Information comes from everywhere

As a parent you can feel overwhelmed by all the information given to you. Suggestions from family and friends are often well meant, but can make you feel you are not doing a good job.

Be open to suggestions, thank people for their interest and ideas, and think about the advice given. Some suggestions might work for you.

**Remember to ask for help from others when you need it but be confident about your ability as a parent.**

## Working parents

Work can be a major part of people's lives. Sometimes parents feel they are struggling to juggle work and family life.

Many parents:

- ◆ feel guilty about not having enough time with their children
- ◆ worry about what to do when their children are sick
- ◆ worry about what others think of them when things go wrong
- ◆ get stressed when faced with events that throw the daily routine out.

Parents should work out how to manage time so they can look after themselves as well as their children. Where two parents are involved, parents need to talk about how responsibilities will be shared. This requires planning, organising and communicating with each other.

Some things to think about:

- ◆ what is the first priority?
- ◆ who does what tasks?
- ◆ what arrangements are there for sick children / school events (who takes time off to attend or stay at home?)
- ◆ find time to spend with partner / friends
- ◆ make time for self / leisure activity
- ◆ make time for family being together
- ◆ dedicate special time to each child.

### Things that might make parenting easier

- Learn about how children grow and develop
- Remember you can do things differently
- Be strong enough to say you don't know how to do some things
- Be prepared to ask for information or advice.

### Accept your feelings

Understand that mixed feelings are normal. At times of stress or when things change in your family, you can be swamped with lots of emotions. It is important to reach out - speak to your partner, to your friends, to family members or to someone not caught up in the emotion.



### Get support

Parenting is hard to do without help from others. If you feel alone and can't find support within your family, find someone to talk to. **Don't be afraid to ask for help - it is not a sign that you can't cope. You will find that others feel the same as you.**

**Parentline 132 055**

### Trust yourself

Everyone has their own ideas about parenting. It's easy to become confused or feel what you're doing is not good enough. Listen to other people's ideas but do what feels right for you and your children. Trust your own judgement.

### Look after yourself

Remember you are a person as well as a parent. Don't expect too much of yourself or others. Praise yourself for simple things. Don't dwell on mistakes (mistakes are for learning from, not for making you feel bad).

Try to find things to look forward to - even small things like having half an hour to yourself to read a magazine or ring a friend.

### Value yourself

You are doing an important job. Be proud of the effort you put in through the day, no matter how small the achievement. Never forget how important parenting is.



### Take care of your relationship

As a parent it's important you feel loved and supported too. Your closest relationship will probably be with your husband, wife or partner, or perhaps a special friend. Make regular time for your adult relationships. Children learn about relationships from what's happening around them.



### Work out your own values

Clear values and beliefs are an important foundation when raising children. Try to reach an agreement with your partner if you have a difference of opinion. A clear and shared form of parenting is less confusing for your child. If you and your partner differ, try not to put each other down.

### Managing anger

There are times in all parents' lives when they feel very angry. Most of the time parents manage to handle it successfully, but sometimes the anger can be in danger of getting out of control. Try to do something about whatever is causing the underlying feeling. Work out when you are most likely to lose your cool and plan to do something different at those times, e.g. when you first get home from work.

**Note: If you have lost control and hurt your child or have been violent to others in your home it's important to get help.**

### Sorting and fixing

If you have violence in your home, money difficulties, ill health, arguments with neighbours or hassles at work, try to sort out the problem. Avoiding action is likely to make things feel worse for you. **Maybe seek advice from a professional if you can't sort it out within your family.**

**If you are experiencing domestic violence, call the DoCS Domestic Violence Line on 1800 656 463.**

### Reward yourself

Do at least one thing a day that makes you feel good. Ask someone to help so you can have 'time out' to do whatever you feel like doing. Have a bubble bath, read a magazine, kick a football, go for a walk, talk to a friend.



## Reminders



- Your style of parenting will shape your child's life, so make the foundation solid.
- Find out more about child development.
- Mistakes only matter if you keep repeating them.
- Plan, organise and communicate so you can balance work and family responsibilities, and meet your child's needs.
- Don't waste your time and energy feeling guilty – change what you are doing.
- If you have a problem with anger or violence, get help.
- Seek help from others when you need it but continue to believe in yourself.

# Families that work well

Families have changed a lot in recent years. There are so many different types of family and parenting styles today. The family your child grows up in will influence how they cope with life. As a loving, caring family can create a child with good self-esteem, an unhappy, fearful family can lead to low self-esteem and problems for a child.

## Make family time

- ★ Take time to listen to your kids - try and work out the feelings behind their words and actions and don't jump in with answers or criticisms.
- ★ Do fun things together - play games, go on outings, play sport, go for a walk and share hobbies.
- ★ Share mealtimes together and turn off the TV - talk to each other about what's been happening.
- ★ Find time to talk to your kids - sometimes this can be one-on-one time, or as a whole family or even while you are doing the chores together or driving them to school.
- ★ Share your feelings appropriately so your kids learn that it's ok for them to share their feelings.

## Show affection, encouragement and appreciation

- ★ Let your child know what you love about them.
- ★ Give hugs, be thoughtful and kind.
- ★ Don't use put-downs, threaten or blame your child - it makes them feel hopeless.

## Keep in touch with friends and relatives

- ★ The more a family is isolated from others, the more chance there will be problems.
- ★ Knowing there are people outside to turn to when things get tough will make a difference to your child's happiness and ability to make friends.

## Share the chores and the power

- ★ Encourage children to take on more responsibility as they get older.
- ★ Allow them to have some say over their own lives.
- ★ Use humour and encouragement to keep control, not punishments or threats.
- ★ When a child has a say in what happens and feel their views are heard, trust and intimacy develops.

## Accept the differences in each person

- ★ No one should be left out or made to feel like the odd one out in a family.
- ★ Allow each person to be excited about their personal interests, show respect and be patient.

## Family rituals and traditions

The daily rituals and things you do on special occasions build a sense of belonging, security and contentment. Daily rituals can be how you say goodbye, and what you do at mealtimes and bedtime.

It is good for families to celebrate special occasions (e.g. birthdays, Christmas and Name Days) and have traditions for what happens at these times.



# Stepfamilies

Building a new family is an exciting challenge. It takes lots of time, energy and hard work. There are many different kinds of stepfamilies and each will have different strengths and problems to overcome.



## Starting a stepfamily

- \* Don't expect your stepchildren to love you, but do expect them to respect you, as you respect them.
- \* A new partner can't suddenly become a new mother or father. Parenting will still need to be done by the children's birth parents if they are still involved.
- \* There may be difficulties with the children's other parent about arrangements for ongoing contact with the children.

**Don't underestimate how difficult it is to build a complicated new family. It takes years, not months, and lots of effort.**

## What parents can do

- \* Keep changes to a minimum. It can be a lot for children to manage when homes, schools and friends all have to change.

- \* Talk to your child and partner about your plans.
- \* Tell your child it will be strange at first, but in time they will get used to the changes.
- \* Listen to your child's feelings.
- \* Never speak badly of a child's parents in front of them, even though this may be hard.
- \* Understand the strong bond between your new partner and their child. Make time for them to be together.
- \* Make time to spend with your own child if you have one.
- \* Try to find a new place to live so it is a new beginning for everyone. It will be harder for everyone to feel they belong if you live in the home of one of the previous families.
- \* Decide that, unless a child is very young, each parent should discipline their own child and not expect their new partner to do it, especially at first.

## REMINDERS

Stepfamilies are usually decided by two adults who want to be together. The child may not share the same feelings.

Never fight in front of your child or stepchild.

Make time for your partner.

Keep your own individual interests as adults and support the different interests and activities of each child.

Every family and stepfamily is unique. What works for some may not work for you.

Be honest about your feelings and sensitive about how you express them.

Listen to the feelings of all the others in the family.

Stepfamilies are complex, but they can be rewarding when they work.

If you need help, call Relationships Australia on 02 9418 8800 or 1300 364 277 or Centacare Relationship Counselling on 02 9390 5366.

# Being a Dad

Whether you are part of a traditional two parent family, a stepfamily, a full-time single parent, or have your children for some of the time, being a dad is your most important job. Parenting can be done by either parent, but children have different experiences with their fathers than with their mothers.

## Some things that all dads can do:

- ▶ talk about your feelings so your child learns it's okay for men to talk about feelings
- ▶ spend time with your daughter. It will help her to feel good about being female if she sees you enjoy your time with her and you respect women. You are teaching her how to expect men to treat her when she grows up
- ▶ show your son how to be a man. Ensure he spends time with you and other men. He will learn more from what you do than what you say
  - ▶ enjoy your child's company, get involved, read, play, have fun and do things together
  - ▶ encourage your child to stick at a problem, even if it is hard
- ▶ expect your child to do their best, be proud of them when they do, but also when they try, but fail.

***What matters most for your child is how you behave as their dad. Even if you are not a full-time dad your child needs to know that you care about them and will look after them.***

## Dads in nuclear families

If you're a dad in a nuclear family it's important your relationship with your partner/spouse is working well. Children usually love both parents and it hurts them to see parents fighting or putting each other down.

### ***What you can do:***

- ▶ make time to be together as a couple without your child
- ▶ discuss your feelings right from the start. Your first baby will bring many changes to your relationship with your partner. She may feel tired or overwhelmed coping with body changes and new responsibilities. You may feel left out or even jealous
- ▶ talk to your partner about how it is for you as well. Men often feel a great responsibility to look after their family when there is a new baby and the wife's income has suddenly stopped
- ▶ talk about what you each expect of yourself and your partner in looking after your child. Work out how you will share things like getting up at night or bathing and feeding

***The most important gift that you can give your child is your love. Get to know them and be involved in their lives.***

## Single dads

If you are separated from your child's mother, being a dad may be hard. But you are still a parent and it's important your child still feels this.

### *What you can do:*

- ▶ don't let hurt or anger towards your child's mother spoil your relationship with your child. If you can't work something positive out with your ex-partner, get outside help for the sake of your child
- ▶ keep in touch with your child even if it is painful saying goodbye after a visit
- ▶ your child will be hurt if you stay away because you are angry about money arrangements with your ex-partner
- ▶ be positive (or don't say anything) when you talk to your child about their mother

- ▶ talk to your friends and get adult support about your concerns regarding your ex-partner
- ▶ be on time for pick-ups and drop-offs
- ▶ keep in touch with your child often. Phone, write and remember birthdays and special occasions
- ▶ children have the right to be cared for by both parents, even if their parents are not together.

When children are asked what they most want from their fathers they say they want to do things with them, or simply just sit and talk. They also prefer it when their fathers spend less time working so they can be with them.



## Dads in stepfamilies

Being a stepfather can be difficult, especially if the children are older when you join the family. You may also have your own children who will still want your time. Children who have been alone with their mother often feel upset or angry about having someone else take some of her time.

Some children do not want anyone else to replace their own dad's place in the family.

### *What you can do:*

- ▶ be prepared to spend time getting to know your partner's child
- ▶ give the child time. You cannot take their dad's place, but you can still build a close relationship with them
- ▶ be friendly but don't crowd them
- ▶ plan household rules with your partner and include the child. The rules you decide upon may be very different from what they are used to
- ▶ let the child have some time on their own with their mother without you around
- ▶ offer to do some things with your stepchild yourself. Choose things they enjoy
- ▶ make sure that you have some special time with your own child, too. It can be tricky making a place in your life for everyone, but it is important to your child that you are involved in their life
- ▶ help your stepchild to stay in contact with their dad if this is what they want.



- ▶ try to sort out relationship problems away from your child
- ▶ treat your partner with respect so that your daughters will grow up knowing that it is good to be a woman and your sons will know how to treat women well.

***If you still can't agree, remember children can learn to cope with parents being different. What they can't cope with is parents putting each other down.***



# Bedwetting

Childhood bedwetting is very common and many children of primary school age still wet the bed. Until the age of ten, about one in ten children wets the bed. If your child wets the bed they are probably not the only one in their class that does.

## Bedwetting happens because:

- \* some children have delayed control of the bladder muscle
- \* some children get control over their bladder later than others
- \* some children produce more urine (wee) at night than others
- \* children who wet the bed may have bladders which cannot hold a large amount of urine
- \* occasionally bedwetting may be due to a medical problem so have this checked out with the doctor.
- \* children who wet the bed sometimes sleep more than other children
- \* bedwetting can run in the family.

*Bedwetting is no-one's fault. It is not caused by laziness or seeking attention. It is something which your child has no control over.*

## What parents can do:

- \* let your child know that bedwetting is normal, and that they will grow out of it. It can also help them to know that someone else in the family used to wet the bed
- \* explain some of the reasons for bedwetting to your child e.g. *"While you are asleep your brain isn't getting the message that you need to go to the toilet and so you don't wake up"*
- \* avoid giving a child that wets the bed soft drinks containing caffeine as it increases the amount of urine (wee) produced
- \* if the bedwetting seems to be because of stress or worries, do what you can to make your child feel better.

*Children who have been dry might start wetting the bed if they are very stressed, e.g. by a family break-up, starting school, or illness. The bedwetting will usually stop when the child begins to feel more secure. If a child who has been dry starts to wet the bed again it is important to have a medical check-up to check there is no infection or other health problem.*

## Check with your doctor if:

- \* your child who has been dry starts wetting again and this continues
- \* you or your child are becoming very upset by the bedwetting
- \* your child is constipated often (this can sometimes be related to bedwetting)
- \* you have other concerns about bedwetting.

## What not to do:

- \* don't punish, criticise or tease your child and don't let others either. This can make your child tense and anxious and make the problem worse. Remember children cannot control their bedwetting
- \* it does not help to lift your child out of bed at night to go to the toilet.

# Grief and Loss

Growing up is an ongoing process of change that involves both losses and gains. Children are likely to show their grief in less direct ways than adults. Children move in and out of grief.

## Times when children grieve:

- + when a parent dies or goes away
- + when parents separate or families break up
- + loss of a friend or friendship
- + loss of a pet
- + having a disability
- + loss of memories due to fire or flood
- + loss of culture and homeland when moving to a new country
- + death of a grandparent
- + moving house or changing schools
- + long periods of separation from a parent
- + being in hospital.

## Children's understanding of loss

### Preschool children

In the years before school, children don't understand that death is forever.

Young children don't have the words to express feelings and will show them in the way they act. They may be more clingy and needy or develop problems separating from you.

### Early years of school

Children are beginning to learn that death is permanent. Some children feel responsible for the death or separation and think it was because they were naughty. They may also worry about who will look after them, e.g. if they have lost a parent they may worry about losing the other parent as well.

### Later primary school years

Children now understand that death is permanent. They are less likely to blame themselves for what has happened but they might blame others, e.g. blame one parent for a divorce.

They may be interested in life after death and want to know what happens and ask spiritual questions.

## Teenagers and grief

Teenagers grieve in much the same way as adults but at this stage of their development they often have emotional 'ups and downs' so can become deeply distressed. They can also become withdrawn, depressed and moody.

## Special Note

Professional help is needed if your child:

- + talks of not wanting to live or being better off dead
- + seems to be preoccupied with dying
- + is unable to concentrate and is withdrawn at school months after a major life event
- + is crying, sad or depressed much of the time.

## What parents can do:

- + provide a safe environment where your child feels able to express feelings. Help them find ways to show their feelings through play, writing a letter, a story, a poem, painting or drawing
- + give clear and honest information to children in a way that they can understand
- + allow children time to talk, ask questions and share worries with a caring adult
- + if a child can't talk about their feelings say something like "Some things are really hard to talk about, but talking can help. If you ever want to talk about what has happened, let me know"
- + stick to the family routines. Too many changes will add further stress
- + children grieve in bursts, they have their own individual reactions, and feel loss just as much as adults but may show it differently.



# Single Parenting

Parenting in a single or sole parent household is different from parenting in a two parent household. Some people choose single parenting, others have it thrust upon them.

## How is single parenting different?

- ◆ you may miss someone to share the workload and the feelings of parenting with
- ◆ single parents are more likely to involve their children in the day-to-day running of the family
- ◆ children from single parent households often have a lot of say in the way things are done at home. This can create difficulties at school when teachers don't give them the same level of responsibility
- ◆ parenting a baby alone can be very stressful. Babies need 24-hour care but parents need breaks and someone to talk to, who can provide help and support.

## What parents need to think about:

- ◆ children need to be 'children'. Sharing the load shouldn't take over. They need time to do children's things
- ◆ children need to know that the parent is the grown-up and will look after them



**Note:** If your child takes days to settle after separation and this doesn't seem to improve over time, you may need to get professional help for your child.

- ◆ children need to know that parents need adult company too
- ◆ talk to family members and friends about what is worrying you rather than your children
- ◆ children are often torn between loving parents who live apart
- ◆ it is important to keep children out of issues between parents
- ◆ children are more likely to misbehave for the parent who has them most of the time, does most of the disciplining and routine day-to-day things.

## Visiting the other parent:

- ◆ children want to be able to love each parent without feeling guilty. Let your child plan and enjoy time with the other parent if you can
- ◆ make changeovers as natural and friendly as possible
- ◆ allow time for your children to 'fit back into home' when they return. This can take minutes, hours or days

- ◆ don't use children to carry messages between parents, or to find out what your ex-partner is doing.

## Growing up in a single parent household

Growing up in this type of home can be a very positive experience for children, who often have a close and special relationship with the parent.

After the loss of a parent and the family unit as they knew it, children need time to grieve.

Remember to take new relationships slowly and if you decide to have a partner, it could create problems for your children. Talk to them, listen to how they feel and let them know they are still just as important to you.

# Grandparenting

Grandparents are a really important part of children's lives. But grandparenting today is very different to how it was 50 years ago.

Grandparents today can be in their forties or younger, and live an active life for many years. As people live longer, grandparenting can last as many as 30 years or more.

Being a grandparent is a very special role. It often brings an opportunity to do for your grandchildren what you may not have been able to do for your own children.

## What grandparents can do:

- be your grandchild's friend
- be a role model so they too can survive life's challenges
- provide a safety net if relationships with parents are strained
- have fun, explore the world and just be together with your grandchild
- give your grandchild love
- let the family know about old family traditions
- if you live far away keep in touch through phone calls and cards and make visits special
- give security and protection, especially when there are family problems. Grandparents can support and protect grandchildren and provide a 'safe haven'.





## Expectations of grandparents

Grandparents don't have a set role, like parents do. Talk to your adult child about what you would like to do as a grandparent.

### Talk about:

- how often you will visit each other
- how often you will ring and when not to ring
- what babysitting you will do. Say if it is too much for you, or you need time to yourself. Looking after yourself might mean saying "No" sometimes
- what you can afford to do and what to do about presents as the family grows bigger.

Listen carefully to your adult child's views on bringing up children and support them if you can. Talk through any problems with them. They may not do things the way you would, and you may have to accept this.

## The new grandchild

This is a very important time in the life of your adult child and your own life.

Remember:

- take your cues from them
- your child and their partner may want some time alone to get to know their new baby
- support the new parents in getting to know their baby. Help with the dishes and washing/ironing might be more needed than you cuddling the baby. Your turn to do the cuddling will come
- having a baby is a vulnerable time, support and praise really helps parents, e.g. "You're such a lovely mother", "How lucky he is to have you as his Dad"
- when a second baby arrives, offer to mind the new baby. This gives parents time to spend with their first child who might feel left out and needs to feel special again.

## Grandparenting ideas

- When your grandchild is young, check that your good things (china and pot plants) and poisons (from medicines to dishwashing powder) are safely out of reach.

- Have a box of toys, games and books ready for visits.
- Keep a supply of books to read to them. Tell stories about the family history.
- Read a few recent books on child-rearing so you are up to date with new information / advice about safety, health and care.
- Be a good listener. Grandparents often have time to give children a real opportunity to talk about their interests and feelings.
- Let them know you are interested in going to their activities, like school sports and concerts.
- Teenagers in particular value the support of their grandparents.
- Many children love to cook and often parents are too busy for this to happen together, so make it a special treat when they visit.

## Separation and stepgrandparenting

If your son or daughter's relationship breaks up it can make grandparenting tricky:

- you may feel let down, disappointed, sad or angry
- talk to a counsellor if necessary. Your grandchild will need your support at this time
- don't talk to your grandchild about your disappointment with their parent(s)
- if your son or daughter is very upset you may need to explain what is happening to your grandchild, and listen to their feelings
- try to keep positive relationships with both parents, so they want you to go on playing a part in their child's lives
- if your son or daughter remarries or enters another relationship there will be other issues to think about. It is important to support the new relationship in front of your grandchild, whatever you think.

If you are called on to do the parenting while a son or daughter goes back to work make sure you want to do it. It will be of great help to your grandchild if it's not a burden to you.

# Help kids feel good

## *Building self-esteem*

**Healthy self-esteem is feeling good about yourself, feeling that you are a worthwhile person. Self-esteem builds a solid foundation to help children and parents cope with life.**

### What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem is about valuing and liking yourself. It is also about believing in what you can do. Children develop self-esteem when:

- ❖ they feel they have a place in the world where they belong
- ❖ they are a part of a family where they matter
- ❖ they are encouraged to do things and succeed.

### Why is self-esteem important?

- ❖ Self-esteem helps people feel they can develop their own skills and contribute to their community.
- ❖ When people have low self-esteem they don't feel confident about doing things for themselves, or using their talents and abilities in the best way.
- ❖ Low self-esteem is also linked to stress, coronary heart disease and anti-social behaviours.

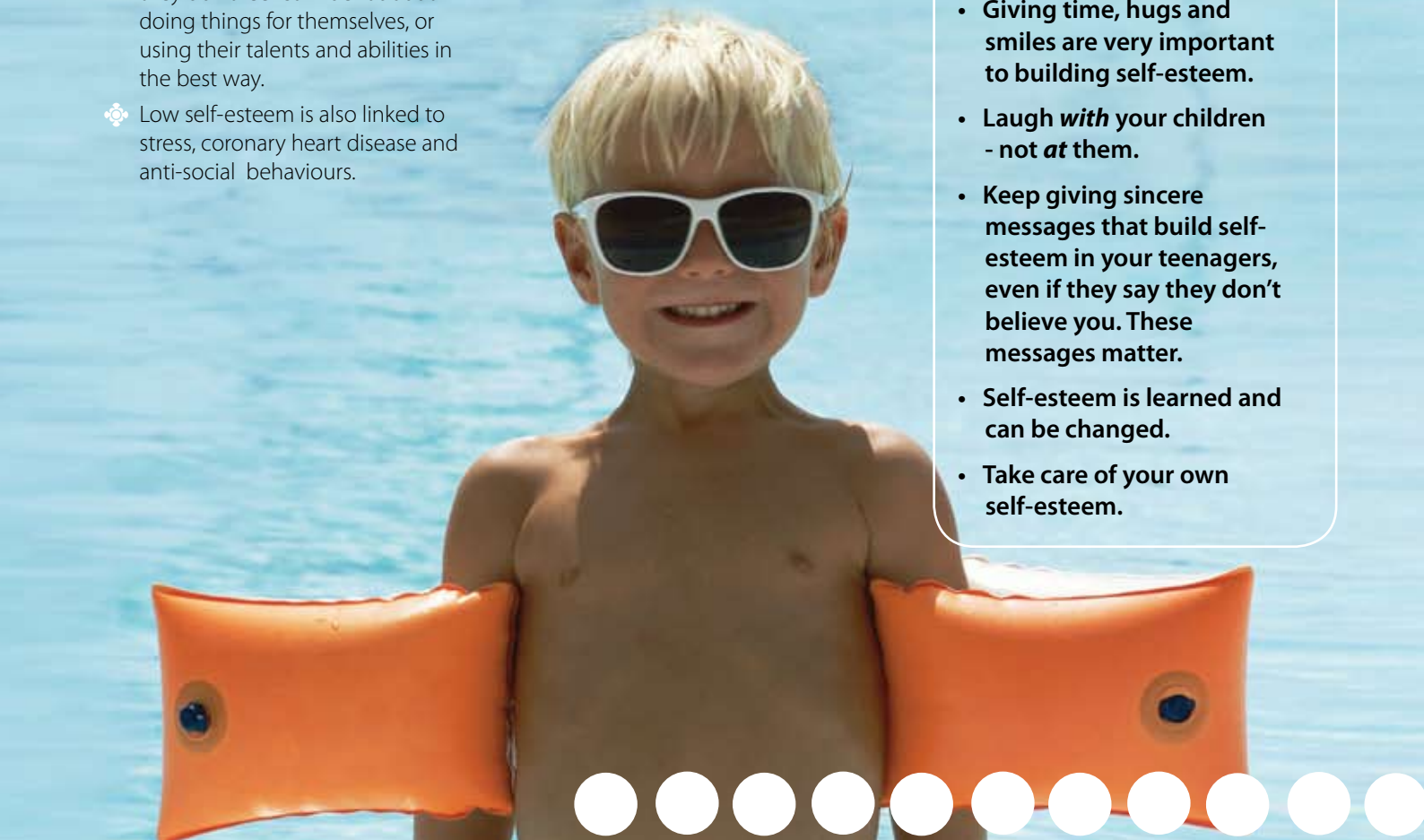
### What parents can do

- ❖ Tell your child that you love them as they are.
- ❖ Show your child that you love spending time with them doing the things they like to do.
- ❖ Show respect by talking in a way that you would like to be spoken to.
- ❖ Listen in a way that shows you take your child seriously.
- ❖ Encourage friendships. Make their friends welcome in your home and get to know them.
- ❖ Help your child to explore any hobbies that they are interested in.
- ❖ When you play games with your child make sure they have opportunities to win.

- ❖ Celebrate your child's achievements and successes.
- ❖ Show your child that you have faith in them. Don't solve all their problems. Help them learn problem-solving skills so they can manage things for themselves.

### Reminders

- **Children are not born with self-esteem.**
- **Young children learn self-esteem through what they can do and what their parents think of them.**
- **'Put down' messages damage self-esteem.**
- **Giving time, hugs and smiles are very important to building self-esteem.**
- **Laugh *with* your children - not *at* them.**
- **Keep giving sincere messages that build self-esteem in your teenagers, even if they say they don't believe you. These messages matter.**
- **Self-esteem is learned and can be changed.**
- **Take care of your own self-esteem.**



# Where to get support

## For parents

### The NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS)

DoCS provides services from a network of 80 Community Services Centres across NSW. You'll find their phone numbers in your local telephone directory under 'Community Services, Department of. For more information about parenting, visit our website [www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au).

To report a child at risk of harm, ring the DoCS 24 Hour Helpline **132 111**

### Parent Line

132 055  
Advice and information for statewide (voice and TTY) parents with kids up to 18 years

### Tresillian

02 9787 0855  
1800 637 357 (freecall outside Sydney)  
24 hour information and counselling for parents or carers of children under 5 years

### Karitane

02 9794 2350  
1300 CARING (freecall outside Sydney)  
24 hour telephone parenting information and counselling

### Family Planning Information Line

1300 658 886

### Aboriginal Medical Service Co-op Limited

02 9319 5823

### Playgroup NSW

1800 171 882

### Relationships Australia (NSW)

02 9418 8800  
1300 364 277 (freecall outside Sydney)

### Centacare Relationship Counselling

02 9390 5366

### Lifeline

13 11 14 (statewide)

### Salvo Care Line

02 9331 6000 (statewide)

### Dial-a-Mum

02 9477 6777 (statewide)  
Telephone counselling for anyone of any age

### Domestic Violence Line

1800 656 463  
1800 671 442 (TTY)

## Drugs and Alcohol information

### Alcohol and Drug Information Service (ADIS)

02 9361 8000  
1800 422 599 (Freecall)

### Family Drug Support

02 9818 6166  
1300 368 186 (Freecall)

## Mental Health information

### SANE Australia Helpline

9am – 5pm weekdays for mental health information and referral to support services  
1800 18 SANE  
[www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org)

### Eating Disorders Foundation

02 9412 4499

## Safety & Medical

### Kidsafe

02 9845 0890  
[www.kidsafensw.org.au](http://www.kidsafensw.org.au)

### Kids Careline (Newcastle area)

02 4921 2800

### Kidsnet

02 9845 0000

### Poisons Information

13 11 26

### Children's Hospital Randwick

02 9382 1111

### Children's Hospital Westmead

02 9845 0000

### Early Childhood Centres (NSW Health)

To find your local Early Childhood Centre, look under 'E' in the Telstra White Pages Find out about parenting courses by contacting your local Early Childhood Health Centre or Children's Hospital.

## Road safety

### Safe driving – Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA)

132 213  
[www.rta.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rta.nsw.gov.au)

## School education

### HSC Advice Line

(open from mid October)  
[www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au)

### NSW Department of Education and Training

02 9561 8000  
[www.det.nsw.edu.au](http://www.det.nsw.edu.au)

## For Kids

### Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800  
[www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

### Reachout

A web based service that helps young people get through tough times.  
02 9818 3055

In an emergency, ring **000** for ambulance, police and fire.