

Getting information about parenting

Supporting children's growth and development can be very rewarding but it also takes hard work and time. Parents and carers benefit from having supportive relationships with others and access to high-quality parenting resources that provide information on child development and ideas to manage challenging situations.

Early childhood services can be good places to obtain parenting information. Other information sources are:

- ▶ books or information sheets
- ▶ parenting programs that provide strategies for dealing with specific issues
- ▶ talking with professionals such as psychologists, maternal and child health nurses or social workers.

Getting information from various sources may help to provide information that is relevant to individual needs and queries.

**Parenting is a
challenging job
but one for which
you get almost
no training.**



Benefits of supporting parenting

Having parenting support helps children's mental health and wellbeing. When parents and carers feel confident about what they are doing, they also feel less stressed and may be able to enjoy their parenting role more.

Some of the benefits of having parenting support are:

- ▶ receiving well-researched information about parenting strategies
- ▶ accessing relevant information about child development to help shape expectations
- ▶ knowing that some parenting experiences are common occurrences.

Early childhood services can be involved in supporting parenting

Tapping into staff knowledge and experience about child development can be a good starting point for getting parenting information. It may also be easier for families to approach early childhood staff when a trusting relationship has been developed. Staff are also able to let families know about high-quality resources and health professionals. Health professionals can sometimes be part of the bigger organisation that the early childhood service belongs to or can be found working in the broader community.

What early childhood services might also be doing

Some ways staff can support parents and carers include:

- ✦ sharing information on child development and interactions between children and adults
- ✦ responding sensitively to parenting queries
- ✦ supporting family involvement in children's experiences at the service
- ✦ having a parent library with current parenting resources which families are encouraged to utilise
- ✦ displaying brochures and community contacts that families can access
- ✦ arranging information sessions with guest speakers such as local community professionals.

What parents and carers can do

- ▶ Approach staff for high-quality information about child development and parenting.
- ▶ Build connections and share information with other families.
- ▶ Communicate openly with everyone involved in your child's care including early childhood staff to ensure your child is getting consistency of care.
- ▶ Observe how early childhood staff interact with children in developmentally appropriate ways.

Maria's story



Maria stopped to have a chat with staff when dropping her grandsons, Steven and Christopher, off at child care. Steven ran off with Christopher to their favourite area, the book corner. Steven picked a book about aeroplanes. Christopher couldn't help himself; he wanted it too and grabbed the book from Steven. Maria sighed with frustration and said to Liana, the staff member, 'This always happens at home. I just don't seem to get through to them that they need to share'. Liana thought for a moment and said 'It sounds like this frustrates you a bit.' Maria agreed and said 'I just wish I knew what to do.' Liana explained that the centre had a resource hub with books and information sheets on various topics of interest to parents and carers. 'There's likely to be something there about children playing together.' Liana showed Maria where the hub was in the centre. She also offered to meet with Maria again to talk about these resources and others available in the community. Maria thanked Liana and said she would have a look.

Articles on a range of issues relevant to parenting are available at:

<http://raisingchildren.net.au> – see 'Grown-Ups' tab

www.kidscount.com.au – see 'Thinking about being a parent' and 'Responding to children'

<http://parentingrc.org.au> – see 'Parenting Programs' tab

This resource and further information on the national KidsMatter Early Childhood initiative is available to download at www.kidsmatter.edu.au
The team at KidsMatter Early Childhood also welcomes your feedback which can be submitted through the website.



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