EXPLORING & LEARNING
How to help your kids understand the world around them

Helping kids learn to DEAL WITH CHANGE
Fitting in at school

Praise your kids for what they are good at and when they do the right thing. This will help them gain a positive sense of who they are.

Liam is 7. He used to like going to school but now he tries to get out of it. After school he just wants to watch TV for hours.

His parents, Catherine and Matt, are worried about him. They limit how much he watches TV. Matt starts helping him with his homework. He notices Liam has trouble reading. Liam gets frustrated easily. When he makes mistakes he storms out of the room.

Matt wants Liam to tell him why he thinks he can’t read. One night, Liam tells his dad that he makes mistakes reading out loud in class. The other kids make fun of him in the playground. Matt asks if the other kids make mistakes too. Liam says they do, but not as many as he does. Catherine and Matt talk to Liam’s teacher. The teacher says his reading is not the best, but that he is improving. She says the extra reading he is doing at home helps. She tells them that Liam is good at maths, which is something they did not know. They leave the teacher feeling a lot better.

Catherine and Matt keep up the reading practice, taking turns to read with Liam. They ask some of his school-friends around to play, which helps Liam get his general confidence back. As things settle down he’s happier about being back at school.

Tip

Choose a school that suits your child’s needs. Talk to your child’s teacher. If your child is not keeping up at school make sure you work out what is happening. Some kids may need glasses or have a learning disability. Others may just need some extra help.

Matt wants Liam to tell him why he thinks he can’t read.
Have fun with your kids

欧元 Help your kids learn about different roles. Use stories or games to help them understand different roles that people have. They may want to play at being a cowgirl or a fireman.

欧元 Plan family outings. Take them to places where they will have fun and learn at the same time.

欧元 Encourage your kids to talk about their friends. Invite their friends to come and play on the weekends.

School opens up a whole new world

欧元 Talk to your kids about their day at school. Try to find time to help them practice the things they are not good at.

欧元 By going to school, kids learn about fitting in with others. They begin to build friendships with other kids. They start to find that other kids are different from themselves.

欧元 Kids begin to learn how to resolve conflict.

Help your kids express their feelings

欧元 Kids learn how to cope with their feelings. Help your kids name their feelings and find socially acceptable ways of expressing their feelings.

欧元 Kids learn how to resolve conflict by watching you.

欧元 Encourage them to ask you about things that confuse them.

Help your kids solve their own problems

欧元 Don’t try to solve their problems for them. If they want help, suggest some options. Kids will also watch to see how you cope with problems.

If your child is being bullied at school, talk to your child’s teacher about it. Encourage your child to say when the bullying is taking place. Ask the teacher to help find a solution to the situation.
Set clear limits for your kids
  ➜ Praise them when they behave well.
  ➜ Help your kids by setting age appropriate limits.
    Be consistent. Talk to them about how much TV
    they watch or what time they go to bed.
    Let them know your reasons for setting limits.

Kids can be demanding
  ➜ Help your kids understand that they can’t
    have everything they want.

Relationships with parents change
  ➜ Kids may start to question you more now
    they are at school.

Childcare options for after school, school
holidays and sick kids
  ➜ Many mothers return to work when their
    kids go to school. You will need to plan
    after-school care in advance. Ask your local
    council what is available.
  ➜ You may need to look at options for care
    when your kids are sick if you are a single
    parent or both parents work.

Seek advice
  ➜ Talk about your concerns and listen to
    others. Remember only you can decide what
    is right for you and your child.

Who to talk to:
  ➜ Talk to family and friends about what is
    concerning you.
  ➜ If talking to friends and family does not
    reassure you, talk to your child’s teacher or
    a school counsellor. Try talking to someone
    at your local community health centre or a
    health professional you trust.
  ➜ If the first person you seek help from is not
    right for you, keep trying. It may take a while
    to find the right person to talk to.

When to seek professional advice
  ➜ If your child starts to do badly at school, or
    they stop getting on well at school and have
    problems fitting in.
  ➜ If there is a noticeable drop in your child’s
    school grades.
  ➜ If your child is aggressive or purposely
    disobeys consistently for a length of time.
  ➜ If your child has constant nightmares.
  ➜ If your child refuses to go to school or to
    sleep because of worries or fears.
  ➜ If your child has regular temper tantrums for
    no good reason.
Helping kids DEAL WITH LOSS and CHANGE

We all have to deal with loss and change. Children need to learn how to express loss and grief. Here’s how Anthea helped her daughter, Pritta, come to terms with loss.

Pritta was upset when her dad left the family. Luckily she spent lots of time at her best friend Sally’s place when her father first left. Sally’s mum had also given Pritta’s mum, Anthea, a lot of support.

But now Pritta was acting up. She wouldn’t play with her sister any more and was being nasty to Sally, making her cry. Anthea and Sally’s mum talked about Pritta’s behaviour.

They decided that maybe the local community health centre might be able to help.

The worker at the health centre suggested Anthea and the girls see a family counsellor.

The counsellor tried to get the girls to talk about how they were feeling. Pritta didn’t really say much. But at the second appointment, Pritta opened up. She said she missed her dad and wanted to talk to him. She also felt like no-one cared – not even her friend Sally.

Eventually, Anthea made contact with their father. Pritta and her sister talked to him and arranged to visit him.

This was hard for Anthea, as she was still angry that he had left them. Pritta started getting on better with her friend Sally and her sister.

Tip When children experience deaths and other losses or changes in their lives they need a caring, supportive and secure environment. They need messages that it is alright to express their feelings. They need to know that the adults in their lives will be there for them, to support and listen to them when they want to talk, ask questions, or say how they feel.

Family break-up is HARD for kids TO ACCEPT
You can also get brochures dealing with:

- Babies
- Kids 1-4
- Adolescents
- Parents

To order your copies from the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing:

Fax 1800 634 400 to order now, or phone 1800 066 247

Get the set!

Useful numbers

Parent help lines in the following States and Territories:

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<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>1300 1300 52</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>13 22 89</td>
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<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>1300 364 100</td>
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<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>1300 301 300</td>
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<td>NT</td>
<td>1300 301 300</td>
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<td>TAS</td>
<td>1300 808 178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>02 6287 3833</td>
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<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>1800 654 432</td>
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LifeLine 13 11 14
Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
Raising Children Network
The Australian Parenting Website
http://raisingchildren.net.au/

You can also contact Maternal and Child Health services, social workers, community health centres or your GP. Check the White Pages for phone numbers.

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