



tips for
Parents

Kids 5-11

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.

Help Your Kids *DEAL*



Have fun with your kids

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

- Talk to your kids about their day at school. Try to find time to help them practice the things they are not good at.
- 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.
- Kids begin to learn how to resolve conflict.

- 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.

Help your kids express their feelings

- Kids learn how to cope with their feelings. Help your kids name their feelings and find socially acceptable ways of expressing their feelings.
- Kids learn how to resolve conflict by watching you.
- Encourage them to ask you about things that confuse them.

Help your kids solve their own problems

- 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.



WITH CHANGE



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

Family break-up is HARD for kids *TO ACCEPT*

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.

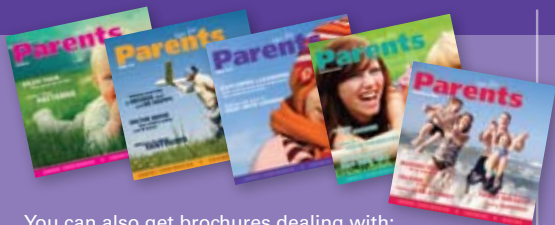
This was hard for Anthea, as she was still angry that he had left them. Pritta started getting on better with her friend Sally and her sister.

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.





Get the set!



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**

Useful numbers

Parent help lines in the following States and Territories:

NSW	1300 1300 52
VIC	13 22 89
SA	1300 364 100
QLD	1300 301 300
NT	1300 301 300
TAS	1300 808 178
ACT	02 6287 3833
WA	1800 654 432

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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