



Building emotional wellbeing
and resilience in children 6 to 12
years old and their families

PARENTING STRATEGIES

Relationship Skills





Hello Parents,

From the moment our children are born, our child's wellbeing is our number one priority. We do everything we can to keep them safe and healthy, while providing every opportunity to live a full and happy life. One of the most important determinants of our children's happiness is their emotional wellbeing.

There is no doubt about it, parenting is one of the most rewarding, exhausting, and challenging roles we will play in our life. The intention of this ebook is to further strengthen the resilience and emotional wellbeing of your child and make your job as a parent easier, while giving your kids what they truly need. Evidence suggests that the relationship skills, emotional skills and life skills outlined in our three ebooks, if implemented, will strengthen your child's resilience and emotional wellbeing. To see the other two eBooks go to www.upliftingaustralia.org.au.

Be mindful that anything worth doing takes time and it may take 6 - 12 months for these strategies to become a normal part of your family life.

We have been sharing these strategies with parents through our Lift Off! Ready > Steady > Go programs (formerly CampOut with Kids and HangOut with Kids) and the feedback has been fantastic! We have taken the time to make the three parenting strategies ebooks as short and user friendly as possible. I know that my children have greatly benefited from these strategies which have become a normal part of our family life.

There are two self-assessment tools at the end of this ebook to further support you and your family to strengthen the emotional environment in your homes. On behalf of Uplifting Australia we wish you and your family lots of love and support.

Kind regards,

Garry Thomson, CEO Uplifting Australia.



Healthy relationship skills

The most significant relationship our children have when they are young is with their parents. It is through this relationship that our children form beliefs and develop behaviours that they then take out into the world.

Our children need our support and feedback to develop a high quality relationship with themselves as they grow up. It's fair to say that all the strategies in this book will support you to have a healthy relationship with your children, which will ultimately help them with healthy ways of relating to themselves and others. These three strategies have a strong focus on developing great relationships.

- Spend regular one on one time with your children
- Encourage meaningful conversations
- Acknowledge your child's qualities

One-on-one time

Spend regular, quality, one-on-one time with your children, preferably with your mobile phone turned off.

Children love this more than anything. Everybody is very busy these days and it's not always easy to find time, so it's important to make the time we do have together of the highest quality. The more quality one-on-one time you can spend with each of your children the better chance you have of strengthening your bond.

Being a single parent in particular can be challenging in lots of ways, especially managing time. If one-on-one time is not possible then we can focus on using the limited time we've got to make the small moments meaningful.

Why is this strategy good for my child?

Spending one-on-one time with your children is a great way to increase your connection and make them feel like an important part of the family. Children love to feel special. It is the memories of time spent together that they cherish and remember, not the things we buy them.

How to integrate this into your day:

- When you're in the car, turn off the radio and talk, sing a song, have meaningful conversations, and ask them how they are feeling.
- Have conversations about what you loved doing when you were a child and find out what it is that you have in common that you might be able to enjoy doing together.
- Make some plans and commitments to spend meaningful time with each of your children. Put them in your diary and make them a priority.



Meaningful conversations

Encourage meaningful conversations

Having meaningful conversations deepens your relationship and makes you closer to your child. When we open up and share real life stories and feelings with our children it builds trust and encourages them to be open with us too.

Why is this strategy good for my child?

Having meaningful conversations will allow you to maintain an ongoing open communicative relationship that can continue into the teenage years, when it is so vital to have open trusting communication. This role models the type of relationship we want to have with our children as they become young adults and further strengthens the relationship.

When we share real life stories it is important to be completely present and show interest in what our children have to say without judging them. This way they feel valued, which increases their self esteem and confidence. This approach assists children to develop healthy ways of communicating with others. When sharing your stories be mindful that they are children so be careful not to overwhelm them with complex adult problems, keep it age appropriate. Be playful, children love to have fun!

How to integrate this into your day:

- Tell your children different stories about yourself, the good things, bad things, exciting and sad things that happened to you when you were a child. Make this a special thing that you do together on the weekends - when you are most relaxed and able to connect in fun ways. Your children can learn a lot from your experiences and through your stories, you become an educational resource to them.
- Make time to share your day with your family over dinner. Ask all the family members to answer the questions - "What was the best thing, worst thing, and strangest thing about your day?" One person speaks at a time and the other family members listen without making jokes or comments. Don't forget to have fun!



Encourage qualities

Acknowledge and encourage your children's qualities

Not all children do well at all things, however, they all have great qualities and it is important they are acknowledged and celebrated for their qualities not just for their achievements. Otherwise our children may form the belief that they are only special if they achieve something.

Why is this strategy good for my child?

Knowing what their qualities are will help your child build confidence and feel good about who they are, which strengthens their emotional wellbeing. It also helps them become resilient, as they will learn that their qualities are a constant and cannot be taken away by another person or a negative experience. They are there when they open their eyes in the morning and still there when they go to bed. When our children see and own these great qualities in themselves they will not need the approval of others to feel good about who they are. When we truly love ourselves we do not grow up needing to compare ourselves to others or give ourselves a hard time through negative self-talk.

How to integrate this into your day:

- Tell your child when you observe their qualities, whether it is kindness, persistence, enthusiasm or patience etc.
- Remind your children of their great qualities when life is challenging for them.
- Focus on your child's great qualities and congratulate them for all the attempts they make in life - not just the positive outcomes. Celebrating achievements is healthy but can become unhealthy when this is the only time we give positive feedback.

For example

If your child wins in sport you could say, "I find your determination and team work inspiring, and I really admire you for that. Well done. How does this result make you feel?"

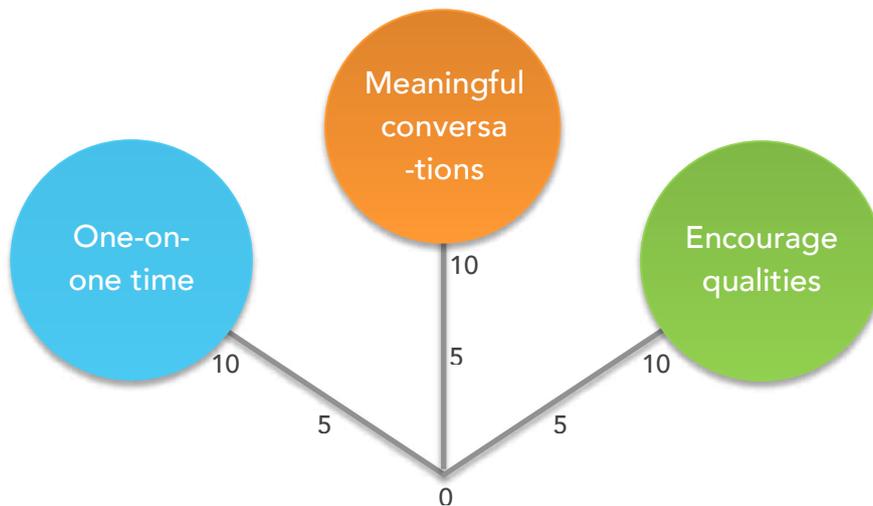
If you simply say "I'm so proud that you won!", you are not clearly describing the qualities within your child that helped them achieve that result. They will still feel good with this feedback but in the future may rely on winning and similar positive comments to feel good about themselves. It can create the belief that they are great only because they won, not because they are a great person.

Our resilience and self-esteem are impacted by what we think about ourselves. If we can acknowledge and celebrate our own unique qualities we build a healthy and balanced relationship with ourselves, which also affects our relationships with others.



Self-reflection tool

Read each parenting strategy and score yourself on how often you use the strategy in your family. "10, you do this lots" and "0, you don't do this much".



Now, think about these strategies and consider what you would like to keep doing, stop doing and start doing in your family. Starting to use new strategies can take some time to do, so don't expect it to happen overnight!

I would like to:

Stop doing...

Start doing...

Keep doing...

Self-awareness tool

Research informs us that the behaviours below either improve or erode our children's self esteem and social competence. It is not a complete list, but it is a good guide. Read through the lists and tick which ones are true for you. You may have ticks on both sides which is normal.

Am I off track?

- Shouting at children.
- Teasing children or other family members, making fun in a humiliating way, using the mask of humor to justify giving negative messages to people.
- Putting children down (E.g. You're stupid, dumb, useless).
- Withdrawing love, giving the silent treatment, ignoring children for long periods of time.
- Being too busy to spend time with your children.
- Not caring about how your children feel.
- Not being considerate and not caring when children are upset.
- Treating other family members poorly.
- Leaving your anger unchecked and taking it out (verbally or physically) on children and other family members.
- Not apologising or taking responsibility for the hurts you cause others.
- Being addicted to alcohol, drugs, gambling etc. and not seeking assistance.
- Enabling your children to become very overweight or obese.
- Negative messages about body image.

Am I on track?

- Separating the child from the behavior. Remaining soft on the person and firm on the behavior and using a calm voice.
- Making a habit of acknowledging your child's positive qualities.
- Being kind and affectionate with physical and verbal messages.
- Support your child to express their feelings in healthy ways.
- Spending one on one time with your children and quality time with your whole family on a regular basis.
- Asking how your children are feeling
- Noticing when your child needs a hug and some love and understanding. Providing them with what they need.
- Remaining respectful and caring to all family members.
- Dealing with anger in ways that don't affect your family. E.g. Seeking help from a professional or close friends and having strategies like removing yourself from the family until you calm down.
- Taking responsibility for how you make others feel. E.g. Listening to feedback, saying sorry and then changing your behaviour.
- Keeping yourself healthy and role modeling a quality life to your family.

Read back through your ticked boxes and get a sense of which behaviours you are proud of and where there is room for improvement. Now that you have a level of awareness around your preferred behaviour read back through the Parenting Strategies for a relevant approach.

Parent Line NSW 1300 1300 52 ACT 02 6287 3833 QLD & NT 1300 30 1300
VIC 13 22 89 TAS 1300 808 178 SA 1300 364 100 WA 1800 654 432

Lifeline 13 11 14

Beyond Blue 1300 224 636

National Sexual Assault, Family Counseling & Domestic Violence Helpline 1800 737 732



We would like to acknowledge the generous support of everyone who helps us deliver this meaningful work to the community.

Key Partners



Merchandise Partner



Schools + Families

Thank you to all the schools and families that are participating in Lift Off! programs (formerly CampOut with Kids and HangOut with Kids). You are helping to build a generation of more inspiring, authentic and emotionally intelligent young Australians. Please share this information with your family and friends - we ask that organisations contact us for permission to use this information.

The Lift Off! Parenting Strategies were developed by Uplifting Australia, a not-for-profit harm prevention charity that develops programs and resources that improve the emotional wellbeing and resilience of children and families.

This book was written by Garry Thomson, Sarah Binet and the Uplifting Australia team.

www.upliftingaustralia.org.au