



Parenting

Families can take many different forms, but no matter how it may look, you are still parents to your children.

Put your children first. It is important to give them a positive environment to grow into adulthood.

Our values and beliefs shape how we make decisions and helps you decide what is important to you.

Understand your own values and beliefs. This will help develop a strong foundation for your relationship with your child.

Parenting Styles

Your values play a large role in making you who you are. It isn't surprising that they also play a large role in your parenting.

There are four common parenting styles. You may not fit exactly into one style, but you may tend to lean towards one more than another.

Each style can impact children in different ways.

- 1. Demanding Parents** are obedience and status orientated. Likely to say, 'because I said so'.
- 2. Commanding Parents** are assertive, but not intrusive or restrictive. Likely to say, 'let's discuss a more acceptable solution'.
- 3. Permissive Parents** generally take on the status of friend rather than parent. Likely to say, 'we're more like best friends than parent and child'.
- 4. Uninvolved Parents** are generally detached from their child's life. They can often be unaware of their child's behaviours. Likely to say, 'stop bothering me'.



Trigger points for relationship difficulties

Differing parenting styles can be a common trigger point for relationship difficulties. This can cause tension between you and other parents, and you and your children.

It can be beneficial to understand the parenting style of other parents.

Some parents aspire to be like their own parents and being like them is very important. Others try very hard not to be like their parents. Therefore it is important to consider the needs and values of your partner as well as your own.

Some things you could discuss with others who may contribute to parenting your child are:

- Parenting styles you are comfortable with.
- Behaviours, beliefs, skills, attitudes, and qualities you feel are important for parenting.
- Do these apply to your current parenting style?

Discipline of children

A common contention between parents relates to the discipline of children.

With inconsistent discipline children are less likely to follow direction. This can be stressful and unsettling for children.

A helpful guideline for discipline of children is: Under 12 years – ‘lead by example’.

Over 12 years – ‘consult and discuss’.

Single Parenting

Single parenting is a different experience of parenting than two-parent families. There can be challenges and difficulties. But there are also joys and benefits for parents and children.

As a parent, it is important that you spend time with supportive family and friends.

Children in single parent households are also more mature as they may tend to take on extra roles.

Remember to remind them of how proud you are of them. Ensure any extra roles are child appropriate, not adult responsibilities.

If you decide to have a new relationship, remember to take it slow. Talking it through with your children lets them know that they are still important to you.

Your children may feel loss or grief if their parents are not together. Keep any changes minimal and support your children to cope with their emotions.

Blended Families

Blended families form when adults in a new relationship decide to live together. Children of one or both partners may live with the couple full-time, or come to visit. Blended families can work well. They can also provide lots of love, security and support for children and parents.

Children can sometimes find it hard to adjust to these changes. They may worry about where they belong. Talk about what is happening and listen to their feelings.

Each family may come with their own values and traditions. Prepare to make changes and compromise, this can help you create your own new traditions.

Co-parenting

Separation and co-parenting can be challenging for you and your child. How a child responds to this varies and can often depend upon their age.

Making a co-parenting plan can be helpful in working out how your relationship will work. It can also assist in ensuring that children's needs and best interest are always the focus.

Step-parenting

Becoming a step-parent can be scary and fun as you figure out your new role. It is a big change for you and your partner's child.

It can be difficult for children to form a relationship with a new parent and step-siblings.

Children can feel jealous or angry, insecure, or lonely.

Spending time to develop a relationship with the children, can help you build trust. For example, doing fun activities together.

Let your step-child decide what they call you and remind them that you are not replacing their parent.

Remember that these relationships take time. You cannot hurry the process.

Next Steps

For more information on our services and how they can support you, or to find your nearest centre:

Call 1300 364 277

Visit www.tas.relationships.org.au