



Parents and carers: 'essentials' toolkit

A directory of useful online resources and handy lists for parents and carers for the school holidays and beyond.

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Introduction

Parents and carers are essential. What would we do without them?

Don't forget That's why we've created this toolkit. It's for all the hard working, patient and wonderful mothers, fathers, guardians and caregivers out there. That's right, we mean you.

Jam-packed with curated lists, self-care tips and helpful advice, it aims to give you a head start and support during the school holidays and beyond.

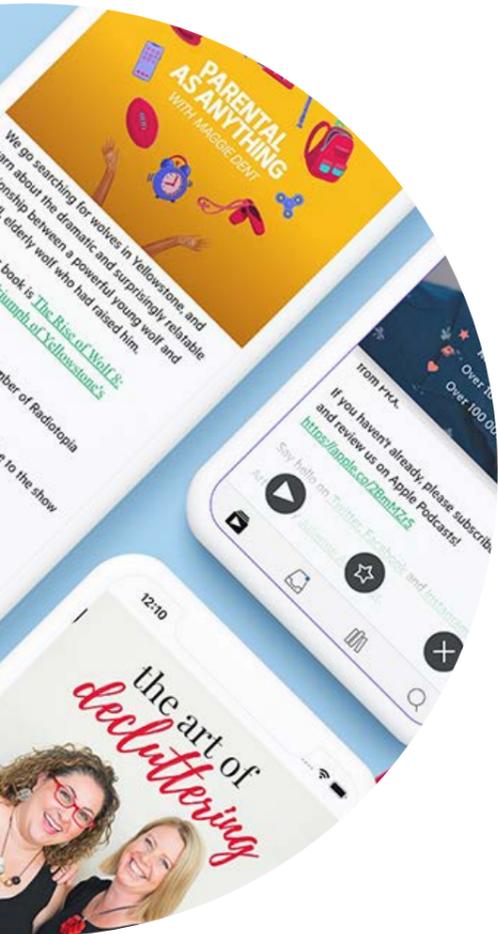
For more school holidays ideas and advice, go to:

education.gov.au/parent-and-carers/school-holidays



Top parenting podcasts

Whether you're doing late night nursing or chores around the house these school holidays, why not have some industry-leading voices in the background?



From child psychologists to mums-of-many to new dads doing a deep dive discussion, here are 17 insightful and relatable parenting podcasts to make any parent or carer feel less alone.

Happy listening!

Australian podcasts

Babytalk (ABC): Babies don't come with instruction manuals but that just means that there's a lot to learn. This podcast will share insights and offer advice about living with your baby.

Parental As Anything (ABC): Join one of Australia's favourite parenting authors and educators Maggie Dent, to get tips and answers to your real-world parenting dilemmas.

DadPod with Charlie Clausen and Osher Günsberg: DadPod is a weekly podcast documenting the new Dad adventures of Charlie Clausen and Australian TV host, Osher Günsberg.

The Art of Decluttering: This weekly podcast shares tips and tricks for decluttering and organising your home. The hosts help take control of the clutter and reclaim your home as a peaceful retreat, where you can relax and regroup and raise your family.

The Modern Mommy Doc Podcast: The Modern Mommy Doc Podcast helps mums say "no" to unrealistic expectations for a balanced life, and say "yes" to what really matters.

Everyday Motherhood: Grab your pile of laundry and listen to this podcast for advice on how to care for yourself while mothering and walk away with a play idea to connect with your kids.

Spot Family Podcast: If you have a family, are a teacher, health professional or are even remotely interested in child development, health, or learning, this is the podcast for you. Cutting through the snake oil with deep dives into the science behind supporting you and your child.

Happy Families: The Happy Families podcast with Dr Justin Coulson is for parents who want all the answers but don't have any time. Each short, easily digestible episode sees Dr Justin address a specific topic, offer his expert advice and provide simple strategies to make families happier.

International podcasts

Spawned Parenting Podcast: Liz Gumbinner and Kristen Chase are parents to six kids between them. They, and their guests, offer candid parenting culture discussions, non-judgemental tips, and a good dose of humor.

Little Sprigs: On this podcast, you'll find a mix of interviews and recordings focusing on early childhood education, communication and mindfulness.

Mom and Dad Are Fighting: Jamilah Lemieux and Dan Kois share their triumphs and failures while offering advice on parenting kids from toddler to teens.

The One in a Million Baby: This podcast by New Zealander Tessa Prebble tells the stories of the children and their parents who find themselves in that one-in-a-thousand, or one-in-ten-thousand, or even one-in-a-million position of having a child with special needs and how they've come to cope.

The Mom Hour: Co-hosts Meagan Francis and Sarah Powers have eight kids between them, little to grown. This weekly podcast offers practical tips and encouragement for mums who want to enjoy motherhood more, and cut back on comparison, worry, and stress.

Unruffled: Each episode addresses a reader's parenting issue through the lens of host, Janet Lansbury's respectful parenting philosophy. Janet is a respected parenting adviser, author, and consultant whose work informs, inspires, and supports caregivers of infants and toddlers across the globe to create relationships of respect, trust, and love.

Turning This Car Around: This is a podcast about parenthood from three dads, Lex Friedman, John Moltz and Jon Armstrong

The Modern Dads Podcast: The stories of modern dads. Men who are not only involved in their children's lives, but active and engaged in the decisions, the drudgery, the pain, and the joys of parenthood. Each episode discusses the issues modern dads face as they try to navigate work, parenthood, relationships, and play.

Not all of these podcasts will suit all parents' needs, and you are in the best position to decide what advice and support will work best for you and your family.

Top parenting websites

The online resources worth bookmarking for every parent and carer.



There is a considerable amount of online parenting advice and information for all stages of your child's development from toddler to teen.

To make the search easier, we've curated some of the leading Australian parenting sites worth bookmarking.

General advice

Raising Children Network - Supported by the Department of Social Services, the Raising Children Network offers free parenting advice in a variety of mediums, including videos and apps. It has information ranging from pregnancy topics through to raising your teenager, and adulthood.

ABC Life - Family - a collection of articles and advice addressing issues that families face, drawn from the ABC's extensive television, radio and online programs and publications.

Parenting Ideas - a collection of blogs, parenting guides and online courses intended to help parents raise happy, resilient children.

Practical Parenting - this is the companion website to the Practical Parenting magazine, collating articles on all stages of child development.

SBS - Parenting - articles, news stories and videos on parenting and related issues from [national broadcaster SBS](#).

Kiddipedia - this online encyclopedia collates parenting advice from a range of different sources, including government, non-for-profit and commercial sites.

Ellas List - A Sydney-specific selection of activities - both outside and inside the home - for your children and you.

Activities and courses

Resourcing parents - this NSW Government website provides you with help on choosing between different parenting courses and explanations of some of the more popular ones on offer.

Family Connect - this activity, developed by [Uplifting Australia](#), aims to develop a family's listening, appreciating and emotional skills, along with self-responsibility.

Parent Works - this free online program is self-directed and is part of a research project conducted by the University of Sydney. It includes ways to manage challenging behaviour and improve parenting skills.

Childhood stages

Starting Blocks - created by the [Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority](#). Starting Blocks has information on your children's developmental milestones, what to expect from early childhood education and care services, and information about caring for and entertaining your young child at home.

Pregnancy, birth and baby - provided on behalf of the Department of Health, this site covers a broad range of topics relating to children aged under 6. It also has sections tailored specifically for fathers, teenager parents and indigenous families.

Karitane - Karitane has information for parents and carers of young children, including sections on sleep, feeding and adjusting to parenthood.

Early Childhood Australia - this early childhood advocacy organisation has a range of resources for parents of children aged up to eight years.

The First Five Years - supported by [Goodstart Early Learning](#), the First Five Years covers early childhood, providing material on education and child development.

Essential Baby - launched in 1999, Essential Baby has an extensive range of information including sections covering the development of your child as a baby and toddler, lifestyle articles and health and beauty tips.

Essential Kids - Essential Baby's older sibling includes news and advice on puberty, discipline, health and wellbeing and educational activities to do with older children.

Reach Out - Resources for Parents - Reach Out offers support to the parents of children aged 12 - 18, including self-help content, online forums and individual support. It is part of [Reach Out Australia](#).

Specific groups

Deadly Tots - this website contains details of groups, community events, courses and activities for Aboriginal parents and their children.

SingleMum.com.au - this website has a range of resources for single mothers, including [advice on solo parenting](#).

Support for Fathers - here you can find [information for dads](#) covering topics like balancing work and family life and bonding with their kids. Part of Relationships Australia - Victoria.

The Fathering Project - the Fathering Project provides resources and advice to Australian fathers and father-figures, including activities to do with kids, tips for raising teenagers and information on self-care. They also have a [YouTube channel](#).

Support for parents

Parentline NSW - a telephone counselling, information and referral service for parents in NSW, available weekdays and weekends.

Relationships Australia (NSW) - this independent not-for-profit organisation has centres across NSW and offers family skills courses and relationships advice.

Council for single mothers and their children - Based in Victoria, this non-profit organisation offers phone and online support for single mothers.

Parents Beyond Breakup - Phone and online chat support for parents - particularly fathers - dealing with relationship breakdowns and separation.

Top parenting apps

Need a last-minute activity idea to keep your child engaged and excited? There's an app for that!

We've got you covered these school holidays with 15 popular - and free - mobile apps to support you and your child's mental and emotional wellbeing.

Apps for you

Bright Parenting - Available on the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

This US-developed app is designed to help parents of children aged 2-10, with strategies to deal with difficult behaviour and methods of strengthening your parental bond.

Child 360 app - Available on the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

This app is designed to assist you in supporting your child's emotional and social wellbeing, with suggestions on how you can build their resilience.

Day by Day - Available on the [App Store](#).

Developed by the [Victorian State Government](#), this app includes a collection of fun activities that you can do with your child around the home.

Family5 - Available on the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

Aimed at parents of children aged 1 to 12, Family5 has educational activities for you and your child to try together, as well as tips for developing positive parenting habits.

Hello Joey - Available on the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

This app is designed to help you with some of the tricky issues that parents face, including disciplining your child and dealing with picky eaters. It includes some paid content.

Learning Potential - Available on the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

This app helps you support your child's learning, from preschool all the way through to adulthood. It has been developed by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training.

PBS Parents Play & Learn - Available on the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

This US-developed app comes with ideas for games you can play with your child.

Apps for your child

ABC Kids - Available on the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

Developed by the ABC and aimed at younger children, the ABC kids app has material to entertain and educate your child.

GoNoodle - Available on the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

This app has a huge range of activity-based videos encouraging your child to move, dance and stretch.

Khan Academy Kids - Available on the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

This app offers a broad selection of lessons on reading, language, writing and maths, as well as many other topics.

Kinderling Plus - Available on the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

This Australian kids radio station plays family-friendly music, stories and lullabies - and it has some parenting tips for grown-ups too.

Photomath - Available from the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

This app uses the camera on your child's phone to scan a maths problem and offer up ideas for solving, with the working shown in steps.

Swift Playgrounds - Available on the [App Store](#).

Swift Playgrounds will introduce your child to the basics of coding and will allow them to experiment as they learn. Suitable for children ages 12 and above.

The Robot Factory - Available on the [App Store](#).

Let your child's imagination run wild while they create robots and develop their creativity and problem-solving skills.

Youth Beyond Blue - Available from the [App Store](#) and [Google Play](#).

This app is designed to help teenagers talk to friends that they think might be struggling.

Not all of these apps will suit all parents' needs, and you are in the best position to decide what advice and support will work best for you and your family.



Top parenting books

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While the kids enjoy some light reading this school holiday, why not do the same and enjoy some books of your own?

Raising children of any age is challenging at best. Add the school holidays and the current world climate and it can be overwhelming.

Here are some great parenting books we've compiled to give you a head start and help you navigate raising children while juggling the rollercoaster of life.

Baby Love by Robin Barker

This book offers expert advice for the first 12 months of every baby's life and full of Robin Barker's wisdom and humour, this classic guide has been fully revised, including new material on nutrition, food allergy and intolerance, and updates on safe sleeping, breastfeeding, reflux and immunisation.

Babies & Toddlers By Kaz Cooke

This book has reassuring info, helpful suggestions, answers to your worries and is backed by the professional advice of more than thirty medical and other experts. Fun, practical and updated every year, Babies & Toddlers has everything you need to know about looking after babies and toddlers.

The Art of Growing Up by John Marsden

John Marsden has spent his adult life engaging with young minds in this book he pulls together all he has learned from over forty years' experience working with and writing for children. He shares his insights into everything - from the role of schools and the importance of education, to problem parents and problem children, and the conundrum of what it means to grow up and be 'happy' in the 21st century.

10 Things Every Parent Needs to Know by Dr Justin Coulson

Parenting expert Dr Justin Coulson shares the ten things every parent needs to know to raise their children in positive ways. They are also ways to make parenting easier for you - so you don't have to keep 'making it up as you go along'!

They'll Be Okay: 15 Conversations to Help Your Child Through Troubled Times by Collett Smart

Teens and tweens are struggling with social media, relationships, and so much of what modern life is throwing at them. It's impossible for parents to be experts on every challenge their child is facing. This book is for parents of young people who want to keep their children safe, whole and happy.

Surviving Adolescents 2.0 by Dr Michael Carr-Gregg

This book contains all the thorny issues that confront families with teenagers, such as technology, social media, risky behaviours, school and study problems, and much more.

Teen Brain by David Gillespie

This book sets out clear, reasonable and effective rules to help you confidently manage your kids' use of screens at this critical point in their lives.

So ... You're Having a Teenager: An A-Z of adolescence from argumentative to zits by Sarah Macdonald, Cathy Wilcox

This book is a straight-talking, not entirely sarcastic, informative guide to what for many parents are the most challenging - but interesting and exciting - years.

Anxious Kids: How children can turn their anxiety into resilience by Michael Grose and Jodi Richardson

Anxious Kids offers parents a new perspective on their children's anxiety, encouraging them to view each episode as an opportunity to empower their kids with the skills to manage anxiety, and thrive.

The Father Hood: Inspiration for the new dad generation by Luke Benedictus, Andrew McUtchen, Jeremy Macvean

This book celebrates the growing tribe of hands-on dads who are discovering that becoming a father is the greatest opportunity a man can have to be better than he's ever been before; stronger, wiser and more compassionate. The Father Hood is the guide to helping modern dads thrive and survive in the only job that really counts.

Everyday Resilience by Michelle Mitchell

In this book Michelle shows every family how they can cultivate resilience in their children or adolescents by focussing on 7 key traits – courage, gratitude, empathy, self-awareness, responsibility, self-care and contribution.

Not all of these books will suit all parents' needs, and you are in the best position to decide what advice and support will work best for you and your family.



Self-care tips for parents

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Every flight attendant says before take-off: place the oxygen mask on yourself first before helping others.

Self-care is incredibly important and can help to strengthen your family. If you're happy and healthy, you can be more attentive and engaged as a parent and spouse.

When developing your own self-care routines and rituals, keep in mind that the more often you manage your wellbeing the longer you will be able to sustain a happy and positive household.

Here are some ways you can look after your physical and mental wellbeing to ensure you have enough energy to continue to successfully parent and care for your children:

Practice gratitude: When you start to feel overwhelmed, try to think about the good things in your life. Even if it's just little things. This helps you change your mindset and focus on the present instead of potential future anxieties.

Keep a journal: Spend some time every day just writing out your thoughts. This can help you uncover feelings that are just under the surface. Once you know about these emotions and what's causing them you can deal with them directly.

Meditate: Just 5 minutes a day can help you feel rejuvenated. If you're new to meditation, you can try one of the many guided meditation options available. If this isn't for you, breathing exercises, closing your eyes or taking a bath can also create a meditative state helpful for reducing stress.

Create a schedule: Set aside some 'you' time in the schedule, whether it's going for a run, video-calling with friends or sitting down to read. If you have a partner, coordinate with them so you both get regular scheduled alone time.

Listen to music or a podcast: Music has the power to influence mood and energise. If you're feeling anxious, listen to calming music. If you're feeling sad, listen to uplifting music. The best part is you can listen to music while doing other tasks and you can even involve your family for an impromptu dance party if you feel everyone needs it.

Not all of these tips will suit all parents' needs, and you are in the best position to decide what advice and support will work best for you and your family.

Start or join a virtual book club: Virtual book clubs have taken off since people can no longer meet in person, once a week/month meet up virtually with friends and family to discuss the book you've read. Not only will this help you talk to people outside of your family and help you concentrate on something else, but it will also give you a weekly/monthly goal.

Start a new hobby or re-discover an old one: Did you used to play an instrument? Have you always wanted to learn how to cook lasagna? Now is the time. Putting energy into a new hobby or skill or rediscovering old talents can help you to focus on the here and now, as well as help you feel a sense of accomplishment in learning something new.

Colour in with the kids: There's a reason adult colouring books have skyrocketed in popularity across the world. Just like it does for children, colouring clears the mind and channels focus into the task at hand, helping you to de-stress of other worries.

Be kind to yourself: Keep in mind that everyone is under a lot more stress than normal. You won't have the same level of resilience, patience and mental fortitude that you normally have, and that's ok. Give yourself a break, and manage as best you can. That's all anyone can do.



We acknowledge the homelands of all Aboriginal people and pay our respect to Country.

Say hello

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