

Newsletter for
Parents and Carers
of Children
Aged 0-3

Parent Line

NSW



Who will answer my call?

We have a team of 30 highly trained, compassionate counsellors who have lots of experience in working with young parents. We know every family is different and so we take the time to find out what is important for each family...



We're a bit different!

We are open 7 days a week and our counsellors are talking to parents and carers long after most kids are in bed. We never get to 'meet' the lovely families who call Parent Line but that doesn't stop us building relationships with callers that last for years.

Parents can get in touch by calling Parent Line (for the cost of a local call from a landline) or, alternatively, you can send us a private message on facebook.

Adjusting to parenthood

Becoming a new parent can be a highly emotional time, bringing with it an array of feelings including excitement, fatigue, joy, nerves and even fear. It is not uncommon for it to take a while for parents to settle into their new role as there is a lot to learn!

The most important task at this early stage is for parents to spend plenty of time gazing, cuddling and talking to bub so that they can get to know them and form the beginning of a beautiful relationship.



Staying well...

In the early years of parenting it can feel like no one's needs are being met fully. It is really important that all parents have some time-out to recharge. Simple examples of self-care are:

- * Going for a walk or doing some exercise
- * Going to the movies with a friend
- * Sleeping-in every so often
- * Catching up with a friend for coffee
- * Date night (even if the 'date' takes place at home)

Postnatal depression and anxiety affects 1 in 7 mums and 1 in 10 dads. If you or your partner are experiencing strong feelings of worry, panic attacks, changes in appetite, difficulty sleeping (unrelated to baby), lethargy, memory issues or intrusive thoughts to harm your baby or yourself, we strongly encourage you to seek support by contacting us at Parent Line NSW. You can also call **Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia (PANDA)** on **1300 726 306** or visit your local GP.



We are happy to provide interpreters for parents and carers to speak to a parenting counsellor. Simply call us...

1300 1300 52

7 days a week

info@parentline.org.au

www.parentline.org.au

Did someone say sleep?



One of the biggest challenges faced by parents of young children is the lack of sleep – its effects can be debilitating and, it is no wonder, that sleep deprivation is used as a form of torture! It can be challenging for parents to know how to best support their child to sleep. Research suggests that it is normal for infants and young children to wake at night and many require comfort from their parent. Changes in routine or family life, such as moving house or a carer being away, can have a significant impact on sleep. If you are struggling to support your child to sleep, you can find additional information at <http://raisingchildren.net.au/>

Parent Line parenting counsellors also have some great tips on how to promote healthy sleep routines.



Terrific toddlers

Toddlers are regarded as being notoriously tricky to parent. They are egocentric, loud, inflexible and, at times, completely irrational in their demands. Toddlers are also a **wonder** to be delighted in as their thoughts become more complex and they realise that they are an individual with unique desires – “I want my sandwich cut in triangles not squares!”. Parenting a toddler takes a lot of energy and patience but efforts at this age are not without reward as children grow. Key things to remember are:

- * **Spend time immersed in play without distraction**; follow your child's lead.
- * Toddlers are often fussy eaters and tend to enjoy lots of small snacks over big meals. **Offer healthy foods often and always offer at least one thing you know they will eat.** Resist making meal time a battle and pack food away calmly if they are not interested.
- * When big feelings come to the surface **reflect to your child the feelings you are noticing and offer reassurance** that you will help them through it.
- * **Create a safe**, contained and predictable environment for them to grow with firm but flexible routines.

Do you react or respond to your kids?



Reacting means that you meet your child's emotionally-charged behaviour with your own emotionally-charged reply. They are yelling, so you enter the conversation by yelling.

Responding, on the other hand, gives your child permission to express their big emotions, ideas and feelings without criticism, shame or guilt. If your child is upset because something doesn't seem fair, you let them be frustrated and express empathy.

Parents of young children contact us for a range of concerns. Some of the top concerns for parents are:

- * Toilet training
- * Managing tantrums
- * Transitioning to childcare
- * Maintaining healthy family relationships
- * Managing parent stress
- * Issues with sleep
- * Concerns for their child's development



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Disclaimer: This article does not give professional advice. The contents constitute general information of a summary nature of interest and relevance at the time of publication. You should not rely on the contents as professional advice but should seek, formal advice in particular matters relevant to your particular situation.