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Adoption

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Summary

- A small number of locally born children require adoption each year.
- There is a particular need for families to care for children who are from disrupted backgrounds and children who have disabilities.
- The Victorian Adoption Act 1984 allows adoptive children and birth parents the right to information and contact.

Adoption can give a secure family life to children who, for various reasons, can't live with their birth family. Adoption means that the people caring permanently for the child become the child's legal parents. This affects the child's name, birth certificate and inheritance rights.

The most important consideration in any adoption is the best interests of the child. Legislation and adoption arrangements aim to protect children by making sure that adoptive parents are well suited to understanding and meeting the needs of the adopted child.

Adoption in Victoria

Adoption legislation was first introduced in Victoria in 1928. The number of adoptions has decreased since the 1970s, because of the increase in social acceptance of single parent families, government benefits for single parents, and improved access to contraception and abortion.

Intercountry adoption

Intercountry adoption provides families for children from other countries who:

- have a range of complex medical and psychosocial needs
- are unable to remain in the care of their birth family
- have no other permanent family placement options in their country of origin.

In Australia, arrangements for intercountry adoption are made through central authorities in each state and territory, and an Australian central authority. These arrangements are designed to protect both children and adoptive parents by making sure that children placed for adoption:

- have not been subject to child trafficking
- do actually require adoption outside their country of birth.

Legal issues of adoption

Some of the legal issues that relate to adoption include:

- Adoption legislation is a state, rather than a federal, responsibility. In Victoria, the legislation is the *Adoption Act (1984)*. Under this Act, adoptive children and birth parents have the right to information about and contact with each other.
- A child can be adopted if adoption consents have been signed or if the County Court has dispensed with the birth parent's consent.
- In the past, if the birth parents were unmarried, only the mother needed to give consent for the adoption. Since 1984, the Act requires that if the birth father is known, he must be informed that an adoption consent has been signed. He then has the opportunity to legally establish that he is the father. If he has established paternity, he must sign the adoption consent before the child can be adopted.

Types of children placed for adoption

In the 1950s and 1960s, there were more infants available for adoption than there were adoptive parents. Children older than six months were difficult to place. This situation has changed over the years.

The types of children placed for adoption in Victoria today include:

- locally born children with special needs
- locally born infants
- children from other countries.

Adoption and children with special needs

A significant proportion of the children who need care outside their birth family have special needs such as:

- intellectual or physical disabilities

- emotional difficulties
- having experienced abuse or neglect, they are unable to remain safely in the long-term care of their birth families.

There is a particular need for families to care for children who are from disrupted backgrounds and children who have disabilities. These children are likely to be placed in a permanent care placement, rather than an adoptive placement. In fact, approximately three quarters of the children placed each year by adoption agencies are likely to have their placement legalised by an order other than adoption.

The *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic) provides for permanent care orders to recognise these arrangements.

Criteria for couples wanting to adopt

If a couple wants to adopt, the criteria that must be met include:

- They must have been married or in a de facto relationship for a minimum of two years.
- They must be in good health.
- They must be able to actively care for the child until the child reaches social and emotional independence, which means health and age at the time of adoption are important considerations.
- They must have suitable financial circumstances and show that they have the ability to adequately support a child.
- They must have a medical examination and a criminal records check.

Other criteria examined include the stability and quality of their relationship with each other and other family members, whether they can provide a stable, secure and beneficial environment for the child, and whether they can maintain the child's cultural identity and religious faith (if any).

Changes in attitudes to adoption

In the past, the biological background of the adopted child was kept secret. Now we know that such information is vital to a person's sense of identity. The Victorian adoption laws reflect this and support the opportunity for ongoing information exchange and direct contact between adopted children and their birth families.

Open adoption means that the birth parent or parents are encouraged to have contact with the child, as well as the opportunity to exchange information.

Where to get help

- Victorian Government Adoption and Permanent Care Services:
 - Statewide Tel. (03) 9689 3888
 - Eastern suburbs Tel. (03) 9843 6413
 - Southern and bayside suburbs, Dandenong, Frankston, Mornington Peninsula and surrounding areas Tel. (03) 9521 5666
 - Geelong, Warrnambool, Portland, Hamilton Tel. (03) 5226 4540
 - Northern suburbs Tel. (03) 9479 0558
 - Western suburbs Tel. (03) 9396 7400
 - Central and eastern Gippsland Tel. (03) 5133 9998
 - Ballarat, Horsham, Stawell and surrounding areas Tel. (03) 5332 1434
 - Bendigo, Maryborough, Castlemaine, Echuca, Swan Hill, Mildura and surrounding areas Tel. (03) 5440 1199
 - Shepparton, Seymour, Benalla, Wangaratta, Wodonga and surrounding areas Tel. (03) 5832 1500
- Victorian Adoption Network for Information and Self Help (VANISH) Tel. (03) 9328 8611 and 1300 VANISH (826 474)
- Find and Connect Victoria Tel. 1800 16 11 09
- Intercountry Adoption Service Tel. (03) 8608 5700
- Association of Relinquishing Mothers (Victoria) Inc. (ARMS) Tel. 0400 701 621
- Intercountry Adoptive Parents, Australian Society for Intercountry Aid (Children) (ASIAC) Victoria Tel. (03) 9808 6613
- Intercountry Adoption Resource Network (ICARN) Australia Tel. (03) 9898 9625

Things to remember

- A small number of locally born children require adoption each year.
- There is a particular need for families to care for children who are from disrupted backgrounds and children who have disabilities.
- The Victorian Adoption Act 1984 allows adoptive children and birth parents the right to information and contact.

References

- *Adoption and permanent care*, Children, Families and Young People, Department of Human Services Victoria. [More information here.](#)

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- [Grief and trauma](#)
- [Support for parents](#)

Parenting basics

- [Children and health services](#)
[There is a range of subsidised and free health services, including services for mental health and dental health, available for children in Victoria...](#)
- [Family and child support services](#)
[There are many government funded family support services available to help parents and young people deal with family issues...](#)
- [Happy families](#)
[It might be valuable to occasionally evaluate the dynamics of your family to ensure that everyone is as happy as they could be...](#)
- [Healthy budget - tucker talk tips](#)
[You can buy more food if you spend most of your money on basic healthy foods like bread, cereals, fruit and vegies...](#)
- [Parenthood and your relationship](#)
[The birth of your first child can significantly change your relationship with your partner and may impact on other relationships...](#)
- [Parenting children through puberty](#)
[Puberty is a time of great change for your child, and for you as a parent too. You can help your child in many practical ways, mostly by being reassuring...](#)
- [Parenting on your own](#)
[A person can become a single or sole parent for many different reasons. You may have chosen to start a family on your own, you may be separated or divorced, or your partner may have died. As a...](#)
- [Parenting services](#)
[Parenting is one of the most important tasks we undertake but it doesn't always come naturally...](#)
- [Raising Children Network](#)
[Raising Children Network is an online parenting resource providing research-based information...](#)
- [Travelling with children](#)
[If your child is old enough, involve them in planning a trip so they can get excited about it...](#)

Family structures

- [10 tips for happier step-parenting](#)
[Give your undivided attention when your child asks for it ... 10 tips for happier step-parenting...](#)
- [Adoption](#)
[Adoption can give a secure family life to children who can't live with their birth family...](#)
- [Empty nest syndrome](#)
[The grief of empty nest syndrome often goes unrecognised, because an adult child moving out of home is seen as a normal, healthy event...](#)
- [Foster care](#)
[Foster care is temporary care of children up to 18 years by trained, assessed and accredited foster carers...](#)
- [Kinship care](#)
[Kinship care is the care provided by relatives or a member of a child's social network when a child cannot live with their parents...](#)
- [Moving out of home – tips for parents](#)
[If you don't approve of your child's reasons for moving out, try to keep the lines of communication open...](#)

- [Parenting on your own](#)

[A person can become a single or sole parent for many different reasons. You may have chosen to start a family on your own, you may be separated or divorced, or your partner may have died. As a...](#)

- [Parenting when you're a foster carer](#)

[As a foster carer, you are providing a safe and supportive home for a child or teenager who can't live with their family of origin. You may face challenges that affect you physically, emotionally and...](#)

- [Permanent care](#)

[After experiencing abuse, neglect or rejection, many children are slow to put their trust in anyone...](#)

- [Single parenting](#)

[In single-parent households, issues such as holidays or major family purchases are more likely to be decided with the children...](#)

- [Stepfamilies](#)

[Becoming part of a stepfamily involves adjusting to a number of changes...](#)

- [Surrogacy](#)

[Surrogacy is a form of assisted reproductive treatment \(ART\) in which a woman carries a child within her uterus on behalf of another person or couple...](#)

Communication, identity and behaviour

- [10 tips for managing sibling rivalry](#)

[Teach your children to sort out minor differences themselves... 10 tips for managing sibling rivalry...](#)

- [Body image and young people - staying positive \(video\)](#)

[The pressure on young girls and boys to be physically perfect is creating an epidemic of children and teenagers with low self-esteem and negative body image. Reporter Flip Shelton introduces us to the...](#)

- [Body image – tips for parents](#)

[Give your child opportunities to appreciate their body for what it can do, rather than what it looks like...](#)

- [Bullying](#)

[Parents can help with bullying by supporting their child and involving the authorities to find solutions...](#)

- [Children and shyness](#)

[If your child's shyness is especially debilitating, you may like to consider professional help from a counsellor or psychologist...](#)

- [Children and sibling rivalry](#)

[Sibling rivalry is a common problem, particularly among children who are the same sex and close together in age...](#)

- [Discipline and children](#)

[Disciplining your child means teaching them responsible behaviour and self-control...](#)

- [Family conflict](#)

[It is normal to disagree with each other from time to time and occasional conflict is part of family life...](#)

- [Internet addiction](#)

[Internet addiction refers to the compulsive need to spend a lot of time on the Internet, to the point where relationships, work and health suffer...](#)

- [Parenting on your own](#)

[A person can become a single or sole parent for many different reasons. You may have chosen to start a family on your own, you may be separated or divorced, or your partner may have died. As a...](#)

- [Partying safely – tips for parents](#)

[With a few simple plans in place, a good time can be had by all at a teenage party – even the parents...](#)

- [Peer pressure](#)

[Peer groups can be a very positive influence on your teenager's life...](#)

- [Sex education - tips for parents](#)

[Mothers are more likely to talk about intimate, emotional and psychological aspects of sex than fathers...](#)

- [Talking to primary school children about sex](#)
[Some parents find it hard to talk with their primary age children about sex, but help is available...](#)
- [Teenagers and communication](#)
[Accept that your adolescent may have a different view of the world and respect their opinions...](#)
- [Young children and communication](#)
[Children thrive with words of encouragement and praise...](#)

Raising healthy children

- [A Healthy Start to School](#)
[A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school...](#)
- [A Healthy Start to School](#)
[A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school...](#)
- [Children – keeping them active](#)
[A young child is naturally active, so build upon their inclinations to use their body...](#)
- [Children's diet - fruit and vegetables](#)
[If you eat and enjoy fruit and vegetables every day, your child may eventually follow your lead...](#)
- [Dr Margaret's Story \(video\)](#)
[Access to vaccines has changed lives and protects our children from crippling diseases such as polio...](#)
- [Eating disorders and adolescents](#)
[Often, an eating disorder develops as a way for an adolescent to feel in control about what's happening in their life...](#)
- [Healthy eating tips](#)
[A good balance between exercise and food intake is important to maintain a healthy body weight...](#)
- [Immunisation – deciding which vaccines you need](#)
[Everyone's immunisation needs are different and are influence by your health, lifestyle, age and occupation...](#)
- [No Jab No Play](#)
[No Jab No Play – from 1 January 2016, all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service in Victoria must provide evidence that the child is fully immunised for their age...](#)
- [Obesity in children - management](#)
[If your child is overweight, you can help by making healthier lifestyle choices for yourself...](#)
- [Parenting on your own](#)
[A person can become a single or sole parent for many different reasons. You may have chosen to start a family on your own, you may be separated or divorced, or your partner may have died. As a...](#)
- [Parent's guide for active girls](#)
[Physical activity is an important part of health and wellbeing, and girls should remain active as they grow up...](#)
- [Soft drinks, juice and sweet drinks - children](#)
[Encourage children to drink and enjoy water. Sweet drinks such as juice, cordial and soft drinks may cause health problems for children if consumed in large amounts...](#)
- [Youth suicide – the warning signs](#)
[All suicide threats are serious. You don't have to be a trained professional to help a person contemplating suicide...](#)

Common childhood health concerns

- [Abdominal pain in children](#)
[Children may feel stomach pain for a range of reasons and may need treatment...](#)
- [Allergies explained](#)

[Allergy occurs when the body overreacts to a 'trigger' that is harmless to most people...](#)

- [Anxiety and fear in children](#)

[You can help your child overcome anxiety by taking their fears seriously and encouraging them to talk about their feelings...](#)

- [Asthma, children and smoking](#)

[Exposure to second-hand smoke increases the risk of children developing asthma and provokes more frequent asthma in children with asthma...](#)

- [Asthma in childhood - triggers \(video\)](#)

[Parents and children talk about some of the factors that can cause a child's asthma to flare up...](#)

- [Back pain in children](#)

[Children with back pain may grow into adults with chronic bad backs, so it is important to encourage sensible back care...](#)

- [Bedwetting](#)

[Bedwetting is a problem for many children and punishing them for it will only add to their distress...](#)

- [Behavioural disorders in children](#)

[Untreated behavioural disorders in children may mean they grow up to be dysfunctional adults...](#)

- [Bronchiolitis](#)

[Bronchiolitis is a common chest infection in babies under six months of age...](#)

- [Chest infections](#)

[A chest infection affects your lungs, either in the larger airways \(bronchitis\) or in the smaller air sacs \(pneumonia\)...](#)

- [Chickenpox](#)

[Chickenpox is highly contagious, but it is generally mild and gets better without the need for special treatment...](#)

- [Children and vomiting](#)

[Mild vomiting is normal in most babies and improves over time...](#)

- [Children's feet and shoes](#)

[A child learning to walk receives important sensory information from the soles of their feet, and shoes can make walking more difficult...](#)

- [Choking](#)

[Don't slap a choking person on the back while they are upright - gravity may cause the object to slip further down their windpipe...](#)

- [Colds](#)

[Cold viruses are spread by sneezing, coughing and hand contact...](#)

- [Colic](#)

[Caring for a crying baby with colic can be stressful, so take some time out to calm down...](#)

- [Constipation and children](#)

[A healthy diet, plenty of fluids, exercise and regular toilet habits can help relieve constipation in children...](#)

- [Coughing and wheezing in children](#)

[Coughing and wheezing in babies can be distressing for you and your baby, but in most cases symptoms can be relieved at home...](#)

- [Cradle cap](#)

[Cradle cap is not contagious and it is not caused by poor hygiene or bad parenting...](#)

- [Croup](#)

[Croup is a viral infection of the throat and windpipe that causes noisy breathing, a hoarse voice and a harsh, barking cough...](#)

- [Cysts](#)

[Cysts may be as small as a blister or large enough to hold litres of fluid...](#)

- [Dental anxiety and phobia](#)

[Dental anxiety is common, but there are ways to help you manage it. Talk to your dentist about which strategies are right for you...](#)

- [Dental treatment](#)

[Modern techniques mean that dental and oral health treatment is almost always painless...](#)

- [Depression explained](#)

[The most important thing is to recognise the signs and symptoms and seek support...](#)

- [Ear infections](#)

[It is estimated that around four out of five children will experience a middle ear infection at least once...](#)

- [Epilepsy in children](#)

[Children with epilepsy generally have seizures that respond well to medication, and they enjoy a normal and active childhood...](#)

- [Feet - problems and treatments](#)

[Correctly fitted shoes help you avoid foot and leg pain or injury...](#)

- [Fever - children](#)

[Fever is a way in which the body fights infection. A fever is not dangerous and does not always indicate a serious illness...](#)

- [Fever - febrile convulsions](#)

[A febrile convulsion is a fit that occurs in children when they have a high fever...](#)

- [Food allergy and intolerance](#)

[Food allergy is an immune response, while food intolerance is a chemical reaction...](#)

- [Gastroenteritis in children](#)

[Gastroenteritis or Gastro can be dangerous for very young babies. Gastro is common in young children and spreads easily. Gastro is a bowel infection which causes diarrhoea \(runny or watery poo\) and...](#)

- [Growing pains](#)

[Growing pains may cause a lot of pain but they are harmless and can respond to simple treatments...](#)

- [Hand, foot and mouth disease](#)

[Good personal hygiene is essential to prevent the spread of hand, foot and mouth disease to others, both for those infected and their carers...](#)

- [Head lice \(nits\)](#)

[No product can prevent head lice, but regular checks can help prevent the spread...](#)

- [Hearing problems in children](#)

[The earlier that hearing loss is identified in children, the better for the child's language, learning and overall development...](#)

- [Immunisation history statements for children](#)

[By law, parents or guardians must provide an Immunisation History Statement when enrolling children in any childcare service, kindergarten or primary school in Victoria...](#)

- [Immunisations - vaccinations in Victoria, Australia \(video\)](#)

[Vaccinations are encouraged for all individuals living in the state of Victoria, Australia. The immunisation program in Victoria may be different than other countries, and individuals who have moved...](#)

- [Jaundice in babies](#)

[If your baby is full-term and healthy, mild jaundice is nothing to worry about and will resolve by itself within a week or so...](#)

- [Lactose intolerance](#)

[Symptoms of lactose intolerance include bloating, gas, abdominal pain and diarrhoea...](#)

- [Male Circumcision](#)

[Male circumcision involves the surgical removal of the foreskin of the penis...](#)

- [Melissa's story \(video\)](#)

[Melissa shares her story of how her baby caught chickenpox at 5 weeks old...](#)

- [Meningococcal disease](#)

[Do not leave young adults alone if they suddenly develop a fever because they may become seriously ill very quickly...](#)

- [Nappy rash](#)

[Most babies get nappy rash at some stage, no matter how well they are cared for...](#)

- [No Jab No Play](#)

[No Jab No Play – from 1 January 2016, all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service in Victoria must provide evidence that the child is fully immunised for their age...](#)

- [Obesity in children - causes](#)

[Once children are overweight, it takes a lot of effort for them to return to a healthy weight...](#)

- [Obesity in children - management](#)

[If your child is overweight, you can help by making healthier lifestyle choices for yourself...](#)

- [Oral conditions - young children](#)

[Oral thrush, mouth ulcers and cold sores are common oral conditions in babies and young children...](#)

- [Pain management \(acute\) - children](#)

[If you think your child is in pain, always see your doctor for diagnosis and treatment...](#)

- [Pinworms](#)

[Despite the unsavoury reputation, a pinworm infection \(worms\) is relatively harmless and easily treated...](#)

- [Tooth decay - young children](#)

[Every child is at risk of tooth decay, but good feeding habits and oral care can help prevent decay in baby teeth...](#)

- [Whooping cough](#)

[The major symptom of whooping cough is a severe cough, which is often followed by a 'whooping' sound...](#)

Immunisation

- [No Jab No Play](#)

[No Jab No Play – from 1 January 2016, all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service in Victoria must provide evidence that the child is fully immunised for their age...](#)

- [Flu \(influenza\) – immunisation](#)

[Influenza immunisation is recommended for people in known high risk groups...](#)

- [A Healthy Start to School](#)

[A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school...](#)

- [A Healthy Start to School](#)

[A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school...](#)

- [Fight flu this winter](#)

[Fight flu this winter. Protect yourself – get vaccinated...](#)

- [Pre-immunisation checklist](#)

[This immunisation checklist will help you prepare so you know what to expect and what information you will need to give your GP or clinic staff before your immunisation...](#)

- [Immunisation history statements for children](#)

[By law, parents or guardians must provide an Immunisation History Statement when enrolling children in any childcare service, kindergarten or primary school in Victoria...](#)

- [Childhood immunisation](#)

[Being immunised from an early age helps protect your child against serious childhood infections...](#)

- [Immunisation – common questions](#)

[We answer some common questions about immunisation, including how immunisation works, why it's important and where you can be immunised...](#)

- [Immunisations for older people](#)

[Immunisations are important for you as you get older, because your immune system can become less effective at protecting you from some diseases...](#)

- [Why immunisation is important](#)

[Immunisation saves lives. It protects you, your family and your community. And it also helps protect future generations by eradicating diseases...](#)

- [Immunisation – deciding which vaccines you need](#)

[Everyone's immunisation needs are different and are influenced by your health, lifestyle, age and occupation...](#)

- [Immunisations – catch-ups and boosters](#)

[If you've recently arrived in Australia or missed out on an immunisation for any reason, you may need catch-up doses...](#)

- [How to find your vaccination records](#)

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- [Melissa's story \(video\)](#)

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- [10 tips for secondary students on how to deal with immunisation](#)

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- [Immunisation – DTP, polio, hep B and Hib](#)

[A number of combined immunisations against diphtheria, tetanus and other infectious diseases are available to provide protection at various life stages...](#)

- [Immunisations for work](#)

[Some jobs have a higher risk of exposure to infectious diseases, so if your job is one of these, it's a good idea to check your immunisation status...](#)

- [Immunisation and pregnancy](#)

[Immunisation can protect a woman and her unborn baby against many infectious diseases...](#)

- [Dr Margaret's Story \(video\)](#)

[Access to vaccines has changed lives and protects our children from crippling diseases such as polio...](#)

- [Ros' Story \(video\)](#)

[Talk to a qualified medical expert like your doctor to find out more about immunisation...](#)

- [Caitlin and Liam's story \(video\)](#)

[Find out how important you and your child's immunisation is to the most vulnerable members in our community...](#)

- [Immunisations - vaccinations in Victoria, Australia \(video\)](#)

[Vaccinations are encouraged for all individuals living in the state of Victoria, Australia. The immunisation program in Victoria may be different than other countries, and individuals who have moved...](#)

- [Immunisation in secondary schools](#)

[Some immunisations are recommended for all Australian teenagers...](#)

- [Children and health services](#)

[There is a range of subsidised and free health services, including services for mental health and dental health, available for children in Victoria...](#)

Keeping yourself healthy

- [10 tips for happier step-parenting](#)

[Give your undivided attention when your child asks for it ... 10 tips for happier step-parenting...](#)

- [10 tips for managing sibling rivalry](#)

[Teach your children to sort out minor differences themselves... 10 tips for managing sibling rivalry...](#)

- [10 tips to raise an optimistic child](#)

[Be a positive role model ... 10 tips to raise an optimistic child...](#)

- [Abdominal pain in children](#)

[Children may feel stomach pain for a range of reasons and may need treatment...](#)

- [About child, family and relationship services \(video\)](#)

[Services include parent education to maternal and child healthcare, child care, crisis support, child protection, family violence and relationship services...](#)

- [Adoption](#)

[Adoption can give a secure family life to children who can't live with their birth family...](#)

- [Agoraphobia](#)

[A person with agoraphobia is afraid to leave familiar environments, because they are afraid of having a panic attack...](#)

- [A Healthy Start to School](#)

[A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school...](#)

- [A Healthy Start to School](#)

[A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school...](#)

- [Allergies explained](#)

[Allergy occurs when the body overreacts to a 'trigger' that is harmless to most people...](#)

- [Animals and child safety](#)

[Children should always be closely supervised near animals and taught how to behave safely around pets...](#)

- [Anxiety](#)

[Anxiety is extreme worry that interferes with our daily lives. Find out more about anxiety disorders, treatments, trauma, triggers and phobias...](#)

- [Anxiety and depression in men](#)

[Improve your understanding of anxiety and depression, then take action...](#)

- [Anxiety and fear in children](#)

[You can help your child overcome anxiety by taking their fears seriously and encouraging them to talk about their feelings...](#)

- [Anxiety disorders](#)

[Anxiety disorders are common mental health problems that affect many people...](#)

- [Anxiety Disorders - Diagnosis \(video\)](#)

[Anxiety disorders are common, affecting about one in ten with persistent, excessive worrying that can hinder their ability to function. They may worry constantly about things that do not warrant it or...](#)

- [Anxiety Disorders - treatment and support \(video\)](#)

[In this video clip, participants discuss the various forms of treatment and support they have received from medical professionals as well as from other sources. Some of the strategies for managing...](#)

- [Asthma, children and smoking](#)

[Exposure to second-hand smoke increases the risk of children developing asthma and provokes more frequent asthma in children with asthma...](#)

- [Asthma in childhood - triggers \(video\)](#)

[Parents and children talk about some of the factors that can cause a child's asthma to flare up...](#)

- [Asthma - pregnancy and breastfeeding](#)

[Pregnant women with asthma need to continue to take their asthma medication as it is important to the health of both mother and baby that the mother's asthma is well managed...](#)

Children with special needs

- [Autism spectrum disorder \(ASD\)](#)

[ASD is a complex disorder that affects a person's ability to interact with the world around them...](#)

- [Autism spectrum disorder - tips for parents](#)

[Autism spectrum disorder is a lifelong condition, but you are not on your own and there are plenty of professionals and groups who can help...](#)

- [Cognitive disability and sexuality](#)

[People with intellectual disability can express their sexuality in satisfying ways...](#)

- [Disability - schooling choices](#)

[If your child has a disability, you need to consider extra issues when your child starts school...](#)

- [Down syndrome and family support](#)

[For a person with Down syndrome, being included in all aspects of family life can lead to a successful life within the community...](#)

- [Down syndrome and health](#)

[There are a number of significant health and medical issues that are more common in people with Down syndrome...](#)

- [Down syndrome and learning](#)

[You should focus on what your child with Down syndrome can do, rather than what they can't do...](#)

- [Physical disability and sexuality](#)

[Sexuality is a key part of human nature. Expressing sexuality in satisfying ways is important for everyone, including people with a disability. Some people with disability may need additional support...](#)

- [Sex and chronic illness](#)

[Sexuality is a key part of human nature. Expressing sexuality in satisfying ways is important for everyone, including people with a disability. Some people with disability may need additional support...](#)

Child safety and accident prevention

- [Animals and child safety](#)

[Children should always be closely supervised near animals and taught how to behave safely around pets...](#)

- [Bicycle safety and children](#)

[As they grow and develop, and with the help of adults, children become increasingly aware of how they can manage their own safety and become safer road and bicycle users...](#)

- [Body image – tips for parents](#)

[Give your child opportunities to appreciate their body for what it can do, rather than what it looks like...](#)

- [Bullying](#)

[Parents can help with bullying by supporting their child and involving the authorities to find solutions...](#)

- [Child safety and injury prevention](#)

[By making a few practical changes to your home, you can dramatically reduce the risk of injury to your child...](#)

- [Child safety – at home](#)

[The best way to reduce the risk of injury to children is to remove a potentially dangerous item or add a safety product...](#)

- [Child safety in the car](#)

[Taking care to restrain children correctly while travelling in a car is the best way to prevent injuries...](#)

- [Farm safety – children](#)

[Children who live on farms are at greater risk of injury and death than their parents or other farm workers...](#)

- [Hot weather and child safety](#)

[Babies and children can quickly lose body fluids in hot weather, which can lead to dehydration...](#)

- [Internet safety for children](#)

[A child's digital footprint can be as easy to follow as their real footprints...](#)

- [Mobile phone safety for children](#)

[Teach your child strategies for responding to mobile phone bullying...](#)

- [Playgrounds and child safety](#)

[Play environments can be safe and beneficial for your child. With proper planning, you can make sure your child gets plenty of playtime activity...](#)

- [Poisoning and child safety](#)

[Call the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26 immediately if you suspect your child has been poisoned or given the wrong medicine or the wrong dose of medicine...](#)

- [Road and traffic safety for children](#)

[As they grow and develop, and with the help of adults, children become increasingly aware of how they can manage their own safety, and become safer road users...](#)

- [Water safety for children](#)

[Toddlers are most at risk of drowning because they are mobile and curious but don't understand the danger of water...](#)

Child protection and family violence

- [Bullying](#)

[Parents can help with bullying by supporting their child and involving the authorities to find solutions...](#)

- [Child abuse - reporting procedures](#)

[Any person who believes, on reasonable grounds, that a child needs protection can notify Child Protection...](#)

- [Child Protection Service](#)

[Child Protection provides child-centred, family-focused services to protect children from harm caused by abuse within the family...](#)

- [Family violence - tips for children](#)

[Kids are not to blame for violence at home, it's not your fault and it's not a special secret...](#)

- [Parenting support to help prevent abuse](#)

[There is a range of non-government agencies available to help families under stress in caring for their children...](#)

- [Recognising when a child is at risk](#)

[Too many children are physically, sexually and emotionally abused and when this happens, it is up to adults to speak up...](#)

- [Sexual abuse - helping your child](#)

[As a parent, you have an important role in helping your child recover from sexual abuse...](#)

Grief and trauma

- [Death of a baby](#)

[Miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death is a shattering event for those expecting a baby, and for their families. Grief, relationship stresses and anxiety about subsequent pregnancies are common in...](#)

- [Grief and children](#)

[It can be difficult to talk to a child about death, but it is important to be honest with them...](#)

- [Grief – support services](#)

[People who have support from family and friends are less likely to suffer poor health after bereavement and loss...](#)

- [Recent arrivals, asylum seekers and family support services](#)

[Provides an overview of family support programs and health services available to refugees and asylum seekers living in Victoria...](#)

- [Sudden unexpected death in infants \(SUDI and SIDS\)](#)

[You can reduce your baby's risk of sudden unexpected death by providing a safe sleeping environment and avoiding tobacco smoke...](#)

- [Trauma and children – tips for parents](#)

[Tell your child the facts about a distressing or frightening experience using language they can understand...](#)

- [Trauma and children - two to five years](#)

[Preschoolers may not have the words but will show their distress at traumatic events through changes in behaviour and functioning...](#)

- [Trauma and families](#)

[When a family is affected by trauma, everyone will react in a different way...](#)

- [Trauma and primary school age children](#)

[Children look to their parents or carers to judge how to deal with a crisis...](#)

- [Trauma and teenagers - common reactions](#)

[A teenager may be deeply upset by a traumatic event, but not share their feelings with their parents...](#)

- [Trauma and teenagers - tips for parents](#)

[Teenagers may turn to friends rather than parents for support in times of trauma and distress...](#)

- [Trauma - reaction and recovery](#)

[It is normal to have strong emotional or physical reactions after a distressing or frightening event, and help is available...](#)

- [Youth suicide – the warning signs](#)

[All suicide threats are serious. You don't have to be a trained professional to help a person contemplating suicide...](#)

Support for parents

- [About child, family and relationship services \(video\)](#)

[Services include parent education to maternal and child healthcare, child care, crisis support, child protection, family violence and relationship services...](#)

- [A Healthy Start to School](#)

[A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school...](#)

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- [Children and health services](#)

[There is a range of subsidised and free health services, including services for mental health and dental health, available for children in Victoria...](#)

- [Community health centres](#)

[A community health centre is publicly funded and offers a range of health services to local residents...](#)

- [Early support for a child with disabilities](#)

[For children diagnosed with a disability, getting the support they need as early as possible will give them the best chance of minimising the long-term effects of the disability...](#)

- [Family and child support services](#)

[There are many government funded family support services available to help parents and young people deal with family issues...](#)

- [Foster care, permanent care and adoptive parent support services](#)

[Provides an overview of the financial and family support services available to foster carers, families providing permanent care and adoptive parents...](#)

- [Maternal and child health services](#)

[Your local maternal and child health service will be a great source of support after your baby is born...](#)

- [Parenting centres support families](#)

[Early Parenting Centres help families whose children have sleep, feeding or other difficulties...](#)

- [Parenting children through puberty](#)

[Puberty is a time of great change for your child, and for you as a parent too. You can help your child in many practical ways, mostly by being reassuring...](#)

- [Parenting on your own](#)

[A person can become a single or sole parent for many different reasons. You may have chosen to start a family on your own, you may be separated or divorced, or your partner may have died. As a...](#)

- [Parenting support to help prevent abuse](#)

[There is a range of non-government agencies available to help families under stress in caring for their children...](#)

- [Phototherapy at Home](#)

[Jaundice is very common in newborns, so it's nothing to be too worried about. Treatment is very easy and safe. It all happens using blue light from a special blanket that you wrap your baby in. The...](#)

- [Recent arrivals, asylum seekers and family support services](#)

[Provides an overview of family support programs and health services available to refugees and asylum seekers living in Victoria...](#)

- [Relationship support services](#)

[You may need outside help to resolve problems and ensure your relationship stays healthy and strong...](#)

- [Year 12 exams - managing stress](#)

[Help your child manage stress during exams by getting them to use good study habits, eat well, exercise, relax, sleep and keep things in perspective...](#)

Related Information

- [A Healthy Start to School](#)

A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school...

- [A Healthy Start to School](#)

A Healthy Start to School – a guide for parents of children in their foundation year of school...

- [No Jab No Play](#)

No Jab No Play – from 1 January 2016, all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service in Victoria must provide evidence that the child is fully immunised for their age...

- [Surrogacy](#)

Surrogacy is a form of assisted reproductive treatment (ART) in which a woman carries a child within her uterus on behalf of another person or couple...

- [Permanent care](#)

After experiencing abuse, neglect or rejection, many children are slow to put their trust in anyone...

[Home](#)

Related information on other websites

- [Department of Human Services Victoria](#)
- [Intercountry Adoption](#)
- [VANISH Inc.](#)

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