Trauma and children - newborns to two years
Tags:
- Parents
- Parents - Grief and trauma
- Babies and toddlers (0-3)
- Babies and toddlers (0-3) - Grief and trauma
- Trauma and children

Summary

- Babies and toddlers are directly affected by trauma.
- They are also affected if their mother, father or main caregiver is suffering consequences of the trauma.
- If their home and routine becomes unsettled or disrupted as a result of the trauma, babies and toddlers are also vulnerable.
- You can help your baby or toddler recover by providing support to rebuild a safe, calm and nurturing home.

Trauma can have a serious effect on babies and toddlers. Many people wrongly believe that babies do not notice or remember traumatic events. In fact, anything that affects older children and adults in a family can also affect a baby. Traumatic and life-threatening events may include incidents such as car accidents, bushfires, sudden illness, traumatic death in the family, crime, abuse or violence in the community.

Trauma can seriously disrupt important aspects of child development that occur before the age of three years. These may include bonding with parents, as well as foundational development in the areas of language, mobility, physical and social skills and managing emotions. Providing support to help the family rebuild a safe, secure and nurturing home will help the baby or toddler recover.

How trauma affects babies and toddlers

Babies and toddlers are very helpless and depend on their family and parents for a sense of safety and security. They need emotional nurturing, through loving and reassuring interactions, and help with coping in an ongoing and consistent way. This is how babies and toddlers develop and grow.

During their early months and years, children are very sensitive to:
- problems affecting their parents or main caregivers, which may include fear, sadness or being overwhelmed
- separation from their parent or primary carer – for instance, absence due to injury or other factors related to the trauma. This can have a double impact: distress of the separation itself and insecurity of having to manage without the safety, understanding and nurturing their carer provides. Both can slow recovery and increase the impact of the trauma
- what is happening in the household – babies and toddlers are affected by noise, distress or a very mixed-up routine where they are not sure what is happening next
- disruption to the development of a bond or close relationship with their parent or lack of parental understanding – trauma can sometimes get in the way and make the formation of this bond more difficult.

If any of these things are happening, it is important to think about the effect on the baby. If the family or primary carer is affected, the baby is probably also affected.

Common reactions to trauma in babies and toddlers

When babies or toddlers are exposed to life-threatening or traumatic events, they become very scared – just like anybody else. Some common reactions may include:
- unusually high levels of distress when separated from their parent or primary carer
- a kind of ‘frozen watchfulness’ – the child may have a ‘shocked’ look
- giving the appearance of being numb and not showing their feelings or seeming a bit ‘cut off’ from what is happening around them
- loss of playful and engaging smiling and ‘cooing’ behaviour
- loss of eating skills
- avoiding eye contact
- being more unsettled and much more difficult to soothe
- slipping back in their physical skills such as sitting, crawling or walking and appearing more clumsy.

What parents and carers can do to help babies and toddlers cope with trauma

Structure, predictability and nurturing are key to helping a baby or toddler who has been traumatised. There are a number of things parents and carers can do to help their baby or toddler cope with and recover from trauma.

- Seek, accept and increase any support you need to help you manage your own shock and emotional response.
- Get information and advice on how the baby or toddler is going.
- Learn to recognise and manage the child’s signs of stress and understand cues for what is going on for them.
- Reduce the intensity and length of the initial stress reaction by helping the child settle and to feel safe and cared for as quickly as possible.
- Maintain the child’s routines around being held, sleeping and feeding.
- Offer a calm atmosphere and soothing activities.
- Avoid any unnecessary separations from important caregivers.
- Avoid exposing the child to reminders of the trauma, where possible.

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• Expect that the child may temporarily regress (go backwards) in their behaviour or become ‘clingy’ and dependent. Don’t panic if this occurs – it is one of the child’s ways of trying to cope with what they have been through.
• Take time out to recharge yourself.

When to seek help for babies and toddlers after a traumatic event

The first and second year of a child’s life has lots of ups and downs. Development may slow down for a while and then move forward again. It can sometimes be difficult to work out if this is just one of those times or whether something more serious is happening.

It may help to seek professional advice if:
• the baby or toddler is slipping backwards in development
• development slows down, especially if this occurs following a traumatic event or major disruption in the family and household
• you feel that the trauma has got in the way of knowing your baby, developing close, loving feelings and feeling connected to them – it is important to seek help to get this bonding process back on track
• you have been separated from the baby or toddler at the time of danger or during its aftermath
• you or other carers are emotionally unwell with stress, grief, anxiety, exhaustion or depression – this can have a serious effect on the baby or toddler
• your family has lost their home and community.

There is increasing evidence to suggest that the younger a child, the more serious the post-traumatic problems. Actively seeking help and advice is important.

If at any time you are worried about your mental health or the mental health of a loved one, call Lifeline 13 11 14.

Where to get help

• Your GP (doctor)
• Your maternal and child health nurse
• Your local community health centre
• Parentline Tel. 13 22 89
• Your local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service – many of these now have specialised services for young babies and toddlers
• Paediatrician or Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist – your doctor can refer you

References

• Child development and trauma guide [online], every child every chance, Children, Youth and Families, Department of Human Services, Victorian Government. More information here.

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**More information**

**Parents**

The following content is displayed as Tabs. Once you have activated a link navigate to the end of the list to view its associated content. The activated link is defined as Active Tab

- Parenting basics
- Family structures
- Communication identity and behaviour
- Raising healthy children
- Common childhood health concerns
- Immunisation
- Keeping yourself healthy
- Children with special needs
- Child safety and accident prevention
- Child protection and family violence
- 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 veggies.

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.

Parenthood 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...

Parenthood 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...

Permanence 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

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• 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...

• 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 phobias**
  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**

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

- **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.

- **How to find your vaccination records**
  
  If you’ve recently arrived in Australia or missed out on an immunisation for any reason, you may need catch-up doses.

- **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.

- **Melissa’s story (video)**
  
  Melissa shares her story of how her baby caught chickenpox at 5 weeks old.

- **10 tips for secondary students on how to deal with immunisation**
  
  10 tips for secondary students on how to deal with immunisation.

- **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.

- **Immunisation 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)**

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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.

- Time to immunise - free vaccines for men who have sex with men
  Immunisation is one of the best ways you can protect yourself and others from infectious diseases in our community. In partnership with Thorne Harbour Health (formerly Victorian AIDS Council), etc.

- 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 managing sibling rivalry
  Teach your children to sort out minor differences themselves.

- 10 tips to prepare your child for high school
  Visit the school before the school year starts.

- 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.

- Acne
  Acne is common and can make people of all ages feel embarrassed, but treatments can help if acne is causing distress.

- Addiction
  Addiction is a craving to use a substance or to repeat a behaviour.

- Adoption
  Adoption can give a secure family life to children who can't live with their birth family.

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

- Alcohol and drugs - dependence and addiction
  Asking for help when you first suspect you have an alcohol or drug problem is important. If you think you have an addiction, speak to your local doctor or phone Directline, etc.

- Alcohol and drug treatments and programs
  Counsellors, doctors and other healthcare professionals can help if you have a problem with alcohol or drugs.

- Alcohol and teenagers
  Alcohol is responsible for most drug-related deaths in the teenage population.

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• Alcohol consumption – when things don't go to plan (video)
  Don't give up if your plan doesn't work the first time...
• Alcohol explained
  The size of a standard drink can vary according to the type of alcohol...
• Alcohol - how much is too much? (video)
  Youth Central journalist Soren Frederiksen asks young people what they think is the limit for safe drinking and comes up with some interesting results...
• Alcohol - tips to turning down drinks (video)
  Saying no can be hard. There are things you can do to make it easier...
• Allergies explained
  Allergy occurs when the body overreacts to a 'trigger' that is harmless to most people...
• Amphetamines
  Amphetamines are psychostimulant drugs that speed up the workings of the brain...
• Anabolic steroids
  Prolonged misuse of steroids can cause liver damage and severe mood swings...

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...
• 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...
• 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...
• Intellectual disability and sexuality
  People with intellectual disability can express their sexuality in satisfying ways...
• 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

betterhealth.vic.gov.au
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 - newborns to two years**
  Babies and toddlers can be as affected by trauma as any other family member.

- **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.

- **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.

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- **Trauma and children – tips for parents**
  
  Tell your child the facts about a distressing or frightening experience using language they can understand.

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- **Trauma and primary school age children**
  
  Children look to their parents or carers to judge how to deal with a crisis.

**Related information on other websites**

- **Children, Youth and Families, Department of Human Services Victoria.**

**Support Groups**

- **Parent-Infant Research Institute, Infant Clinic**

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Content Partner

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