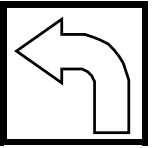


# PARENT POINT



No.2

## Coping Skills for Children

**Helping children build inner strength to cope with the ups and downs of growing up is one of the best things parents can do for them. Often we cannot prevent things going wrong for children but we can try to help children build the strength that will help them cope.**

Here are examples of some things that can be very stressful. There are others, of course, and you will know the things that affect your own children:

- if parents are ill;
- disability - be it their own, another child or a parent. Parent's separation or divorce;
- if parents see a child as being 'difficult'; and
- too many changes in a child's life e.g. schools, teachers, where they live and who cares for them.

### **Belonging**

One of the most important things that children need is a sense of belonging, that someone or some people really care and will always be there for them. These people can be the mother and/or the father, a grandparent or another reliable person who cares for them a lot.

### **Self esteem**

In childhood and adolescence children need to know that they are loved because of the special people they are. They need to be told this often and to be shown by:

- spending time with them;
- supporting their interests; and
- the ways that show you care.

*They need to feel they have a place in the family* - that they are missed if they are away and they have a part in what needs to be done e.g. family chores.

### **Self control**

Children need to develop a sense of being able to manage things for themselves as they grow up. There are lots of ways that you can teach them:

- show delight in what your child is learning;
- help him to learn to do things for himself instead of always having the answers;
- give your child choices and ask opinions;
- teach him to solve his own problems; and
- give approval and encouragement for trying new things and for getting something right, even if the child doesn't get it all right at first.

### **Protect children from adult problems**

If you are having troubles with your child's other parent make an effort to keep your child out of what is adult's business. Ensure your child understands it is not her fault (children often believe it is). She also needs to know that whatever happens somebody will be there for her.

### **Family rituals**

The little special things that you do every day and on special occasions help build a sense of inner security such as how you celebrate birthdays, name days, Christmas, the day your child was adopted, or started her periods, or your family became a step family etc. Daily rituals can be, for example:

- how you tuck your child into bed and kiss goodnight;
- how you say goodbye in the morning;
- something special that you do when your child gets home from school;
- what you do at meal-time.

### **Belonging to a church**

- this can provide support, friendship, meaning to life and rituals.

**Children need your support and care but it won't mean anything unless it is sincere.**