


Growing Great Kids

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Evidence based practice

- Parenting research on optimal parent-child relationships – enabling children to become resilient, positively connected, independent and life long learners
- Positive psychology and authentic wellbeing research
- Mental health and resilience research

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The myth of happiness

Sustainable wellbeing is not found in:

- Gold medals
- Good looks
- Being famous
- Acquisitions
- High test scores


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Education

- Is important and opens doors
- but we cannot all be top of the class!
- We need to feel good about ourselves wherever our strengths lie
- Even if we are academically successful - what is the point if our mental health, relationships and positive identity suffer in the process?

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What do you want for your child's future?

- Have great relationships and feel connected
- Have a positive outlook
- Feel comfortable about who they are
- Be a 'good person'
- Have good health – including mental health
- Develop a sense of purpose and meaning
- Enjoy their achievements
- Really experience life
- Be creative and fulfilled

Think carefully about what success means.

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What the research says about authentic wellbeing

- Predominantly positive emotions – feeling loved, safe, valued
- Meaning in life – a purpose for being here
- Engaged with life, not apathetic.
- Being really interested in something
- Having warm, mutually supportive relationships
- Feeling connected
- Seeing yourself as attaining achievable goals.
- Self-determination – not a victim
- Developing into better people

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What messages are we giving our children about...

- what is important in life
- what you value
- how to be in the world
- ways to think

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Children see, children do Children hear, children say

- They copy the people they see around them.
- When these people are significant to them they look to them as a role model.

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What we say...

- What do we talk about most with each other in the family?
- What are our conversations with our children about?
- Do we speak **with** our children or **at** them?

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Parenting...

- is not always easy
- you do your best but...
- sometimes we make mistakes
- we all do

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The most important job you will ever have

- You are your child's first and most important teacher
- You are not only helping create your children's future - but also the future of the world

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It is also the toughest job

- To be the best possible parent you must teach your child to live well without you.
- If you do this you are likely to preserve a positive relationship for all time.
- If your child doesn't say '*you are horrible and I hate you*' or '*you are not my friend*' from time to time you are probably doing / giving too much!

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Different styles of parenting

- **Neglectful / uninvolved** – provision of shelter, food etc but emotionally absent
- **Permissive** – warm and loving, few boundaries and low expectations
- **Authoritarian** – distant and demanding
- **Authoritative – Facilitative** – warm, structured, responsive, flexible, high but appropriate expectations

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Permissive – love but low expectations and boundaries

- Warmth and love is good BUT...
- children not encouraged to consider others
- Parents are afraid of upsetting them so they get what they want
- They do not grow up properly – poor socialisation and self management
- Be friendly but do not try and be your child's best friend – you are their parent, it is different

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Low expectations leads to...

- Children not knowing what to do in situations
- Feeling insecure
- Testing out boundaries
- Not learning to be considerate of others
- Not making healthy relationships
- Not feeling good about themselves

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Bubble wrapped kids with helicopter parents

- Over-protected – avoid them being unhappy
- Risk-averse parenting – keep them safe at all costs
- Demand driven – give them what they want
- Not expected to contribute or try things themselves
- Focus on their rights rather than community responsibilities
- Lack independence
- Not very resourceful
- Not resilient to adversity
- Not well connected to others

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Authoritarian: High control, low warmth

- High expectations are good BUT
- with these parents nothing is good enough
- social and emotional needs are not a priority
- parenting is about the parent rather than the child

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Tiger moms

- See the world as very competitive
- Want their child to excel
- Make high demands and reduce all other activities
- Tiger moms (and dads) make demands on their children for their own status and standing, not for their child's benefit
- Outcomes
 - has potentially negative impact on mental health
 - Children may grow to be resentful, choose to opt out.
 - They may not become their own person.

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Facilitative parenting, warm and communicative with clear boundaries

- High expectations – that fit child's strengths and needs
- Is affectionate, considers what the child wants and needs but sets limits
- Teaches and reinforces pro-social behaviour
- Gives choices with clear consequences
- Positive communication
- The child becomes a fully functioning person with the best chance of wellbeing

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A facilitative parent

- Allows their child not to be perfect
- Knows it's OK to fail sometimes
- And to feel bad sometimes
- Allows their child to try things for themselves
- And discover how to problem-solve
- Let's their child be challenged
- Expects their child to take responsibility

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Our children need...

- to learn that adversity is normal
- they can't expect things to go well all the time
- Sometimes they will face struggles
- to be allowed to have challenges from which they can learn to be resilient and strong

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What helps children be resilient?

- Facilitative parenting – acceptance, warmth and high expectations
- Feeling they belong and their contributions are valued
- Having a positive outlook – this means focusing on what goes well, getting things in perspective, having another go
- Fair blame
- Knowing how to problem solve

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Ways to build a positive sense of self


- Does your child help at home?
- Is the focus on 'we' not 'me'?
- Do you notice and say when they are doing well "I am proud of you for..." "Thank you for..."
- Is your child encouraged to 'have a go' at things?
- Do you admit mistakes so that your child can too?

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Wholeness, not just happiness Our children need to learn...

- self awareness – values, beliefs, strengths
- that they have choices
- to be strong / confident without dominating others and be assertive not aggressive
- to respect others whilst having self-respect
- skillful communication
- to be warm, friendly and inclusive
- to know that the world does not collapse if sometimes you admit you got it wrong or you need help!

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Families with the best outcomes for kids...

- are emotionally literate
- involve their children
- encourage independence
- have high but appropriate expectations
- support but not coddle
- have fun and enjoy being together

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Useful websites

- www.sueroffey.com
- www.wellbeingaustralia.com.au/wba