



Bringing Up Great Kids in the First Thousand Days

The first thousand days has been identified as beginning at conception and continuing until the child is two years old. Starting from conception, the baby is actively responding to changes in the environment, using cues provided by the mother's physical and mental state to 'predict' the kind of world they will be born into and altering their bodily structures accordingly. Research has identified that a positive start for all involved in the first thousand days has significant impacts across the lifespan of the child.

The approach to parenting in the first thousand days is critical to the relationship between parent and child and has an impact on the health and wellbeing outcomes for the child in later life. Research on the importance of the first thousand days identifies a warm, responsive, mindful, reflective and supportive parenting style as providing the best outcome of children's overall development and impacts positively on their later life skills and health.

The Bringing Up Great Kids (BUGK) in the First 1000 Days Parenting Program has been adapted from the original Bringing Up Great Kids Parenting Program. The original program addressed parenting of children from birth to eight years. This program has a more specific focus on the pre-natal period and first two years of life.

BUGK in the First 1000 Days is a mindful, respectful and reflective program that enables parents to go on their own parenting journey in a non-judgemental safe space. All materials and resources come from a strength-based philosophy that has all members of the family at its core.

BUGK in the First 1000 Days emphasises the importance of living in a nurturing and safe environment. It provides parents with knowledge about brain development and an understanding of how children grow and what they need, the centrality of family relationships and an opportunity for parents to reflect on their own childhood and how to connect to their children. It seeks to build parent confidence and promotes help seeking behaviour.

BUGK in the First 1000 Days materials and resources will support parents to:

- develop an understanding of the importance of the first thousand days and the needs of babies and young children during this period;
- learn more about brain development both during pregnancy and after in the context of the growth and development of children;
- understand the origins of parenting styles and recognising the importance of a positive start in the first thousand days;
- identify the importance of giving positive nurturing messages to babies and young children and how to achieve this;
- discover how to overcome some of the obstacles getting in the way of being the kind of parents they would like to be; and,
- explore ways for parents to take care of themselves and to find support when they need it.

The program focusses on building positive relationships and interactions between parents and their unborn babies as well as parents and their infants and young children. It works from a child-centred perspective and aims to resource parents to:



- identify and evaluate the source of their parenting approach and philosophy;
- understand their child's developing needs in early life and how to meet these;
- develop an increased understanding about their values, beliefs and attitudes and the 'messages' that they communicate to their child;
- increase their ability to understand and acknowledge the impact of these messages on their child;
- develop skills in identifying and managing their stress associated with parenting and develop wellbeing and self-care practices; and,
- to seek further professional assistance about their parenting if required.