



Services and support

Children and families thrive when they're supported by a network of family, friends and services during the early years.

Parents know their children best and make choices about how they live and care for their families. But knowing you're not alone each day makes it easier to enjoy life's good times and stay afloat when things get tough.

In addition to family and friends, Tasmanians have access to many services and programs designed to help provide children with the best start in the early years. This includes the Child Health and Parenting Service, Child and Family Centres, and early childhood education and care services. Making the most of the services and support available can make a big difference to the lives of children and families.



Every child reaching their potential

Everyone plays a part in supporting the growth, learning and development of Tasmania's children.

Every person in Tasmania – families, grandparents, aunties, uncles, community members, educators, workplaces and service providers – has a part to play in helping Tasmanian children to reach their potential. When every child thrives, all Tasmanians benefit.

We can all contribute to ensuring that children and families have access to supportive relationships, healthy food and environments. We can help to provide opportunities for learning and enjoyment, supportive local services, and a sense of community.

Every interaction matters – big or small – because it can contribute to a child's wellbeing. Let's make each experience count!

Together, we can all help Tasmania's children and communities thrive.

By recognising the importance of the early years and their lasting influence, we can take action together to give Tasmanian children the best start to life. When everyone contributes, everyone benefits!

Despite all the great parents, families communities and services, not every child in Tasmania is thriving and reaching their potential.

Our vision

Every child in Tasmania, is cared for and nurtured through the early years, no matter what.

Our goals

- » Everybody values the early years
- » Everybody supports the early years
- » Everyone works together for the early years



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THE EARLY YEARS STORY

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When everyone works together for the early years, all Tasmanians benefit.



The time from pregnancy until 4 years is the most rapid period of development in our lives.

From the very moment a life begins, a child's experiences and environments will shape their lifelong learning, health and development.

By working together, Tasmanians can create strong and positive communities that support families to provide experiences and environments that allow their children to thrive.

Every effort – however small – that helps to ensure every child has the very best start to life, creates a better Tasmania for us all.

What makes the early years important?

Experiences and environments in our early years have a lasting impact on our mind, brain and body. The time from pregnancy until 4 years is the most rapid period of development in our lives.

What happens during this time provides the foundation for all future learning, behaviour and health. By providing children with the opportunities and environments for healthy development, we give them the best foundation for current – and future – physical, emotional and social wellbeing.

During pregnancy, a mother's experiences (e.g. harmony or stress) and environments (e.g. healthy food or exposure to toxins) will shape how a baby's mind, brain and body develops. When Tasmanian mothers have the support of family and friends and access to nutritious foods, safe environments and regular health care, their baby's health and development is well supported.

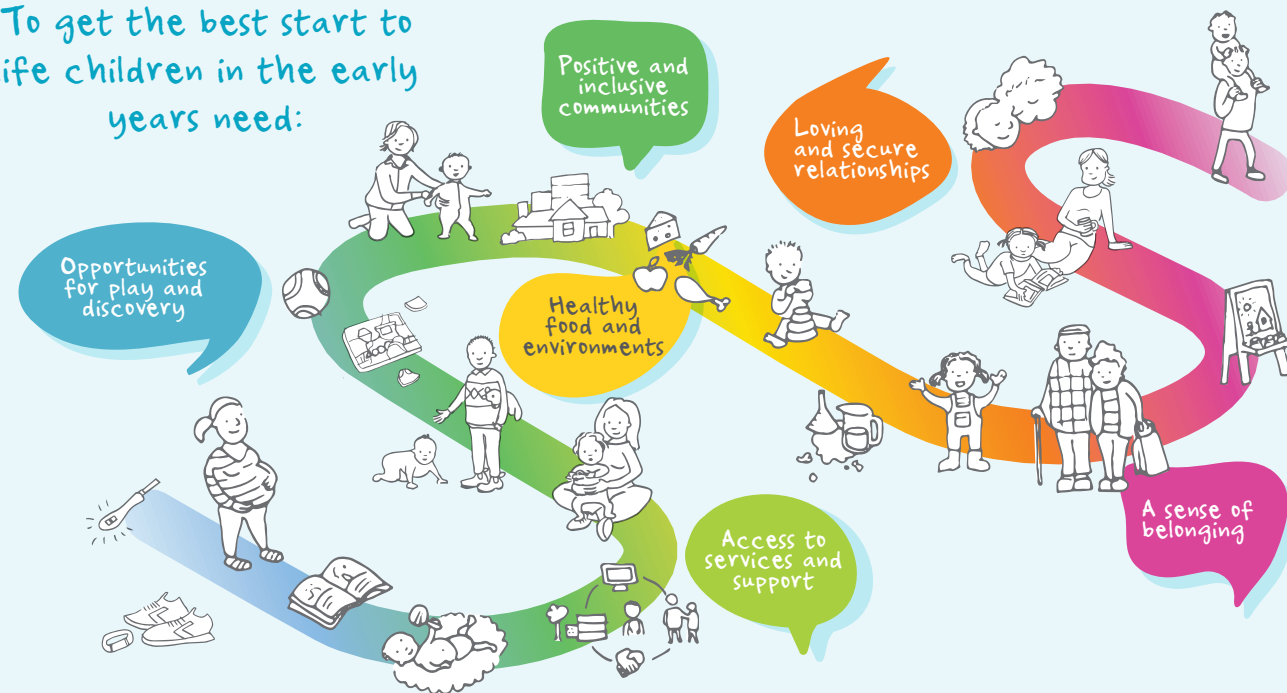
From birth, a baby's experiences and environments continue to have a lasting effect on their health and wellbeing. As a baby grows and discovers the world around them, positive experiences, caring relationships and safe, healthy environments support their growth and development. This provides the very best opportunity for lifelong wellbeing and success.

Reference: Murdoch Children's Research Institute, 2018.

For further information refer to: Arefadib, N., & Moore, T.G. (2018). The importance and lifelong benefits of the early years: An analysis of the evidence. Parkville, Victoria; Centre for Community Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute

THE EARLY YEARS STORY

To get the best start to life children in the early years need:



The Early Years Story

What provides children with the best start in the early years?

- » loving and secure relationships
- » healthy food and environments
- » opportunities for play and discovery
- » positive and inclusive communities
- » a sense of belonging
- » access to services and support

Loving and secure relationships

Warm and caring relationships and interactions help children to feel safe and loved, and build their confidence and resilience.

Listening and responding to children – to what they need, feel or are interested in – helps them to feel valued and capable. By talking with children about their everyday experiences and celebrating their achievements, you are helping to build their brains and their confidence. This makes it easier for them to speak up and participate. Regular sleep, play and meal routines also provide children with comfort and reassurance.

Warm and caring relationships help children feel safe and loved.

Healthy food and environments

Healthy eating builds healthy bodies and brains. This starts children on the right track for a lifetime of good health.

For babies younger than 6 months breastmilk (or formula) is the only food they need. As babies begin to discover solid food, we're lucky in Tasmania to have a variety of tasty and locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables.

Healthy eating builds healthy bodies and brains.

The everyday places in which children learn and grow shape who they are and who they'll become.

Every step through their world – from home, parks and playgrounds into the wider community – brings new opportunities for physical, social and emotional development. Healthy environments are warm when they need to be and cool when they need to be. They are free from toxins like drugs, alcohol and cigarettes.

They are houses and communities where children can safely live, grow and explore.

Providing children with a variety of healthy foods and water gives them the energy and nutrients needed to build strong brains and bodies. Plus, good eating habits in the early years also support lifelong health by reducing the risk of disease later in life.

Healthy environments and positive experiences support lifelong wellbeing.



Learning through play

Children learn through play, right from their first weeks of life.

Children are learning everywhere, every day. When children play they build physical, social and emotional skills, and discover more about others and the world around them. Play is essential for learning and development, and play is FUN! Tasmania's natural environments and wilderness areas are like no other place on earth.

We have country towns and cities, and a rich cultural heritage for children to explore. Plus, there's plenty for children to enjoy in local communities such as libraries, education and care services, Launching into Learning, kindergartens, playgroups and parks that encourage them to imagine, move, create and have fun.

Children are learning everywhere, every day.



Positive, supportive communities

Communities are important for children and families.

In strong Tasmanian communities, people can rely on others. When children and families have a positive sense of community they find friends, feel connected and can participate in the many experiences Tasmania has to offer. This interaction builds potential for community members and organisations to create positive change in their community and overcome local challenges.

Children thrive in positive, supportive communities.



Being and belonging

Knowing where and with whom you belong – your family, culture and community – is important for children.

Friendships and social networks connect children, families and communities and help build a sense of belonging and wellbeing. Tasmanians share diverse cultures, languages, traditions and beliefs. When everyone is recognised, included and welcome, we create a positive sense of culture and identity. This builds self-esteem and encourages children to embrace and celebrate the diversity around them.



Strong connections to family, friends, and culture builds confidence and self-esteem.