

A COMPLETE GUIDE FOR
CRAFTING A WELCOMING
ENVIRONMENT FOR KIDS



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ABSTRACT

In today's diverse world, it's essential to cultivate environments where children feel safe, valued, and included. This guide offers a holistic approach to crafting such spaces, encompassing physical, emotional, and social dimensions. Beginning with an exploration of the importance of inclusivity and its impact on child development, it delves into practical strategies for designing welcoming physical spaces, considering factors like accessibility, diversity representation, and sensory considerations.



Overall, this guide serves as a comprehensive resource for educators, caregivers, and community leaders dedicated to creating environments where every child feels valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.

LET'S GET STARTED

This guide is a comprehensive resource dedicated to supporting educators, caregivers, and community leaders in fostering welcoming environments for children. At its core, the guide underscores the critical importance of inclusivity in child development and the creation of safe, supportive spaces. It provides practical strategies and insights into various dimensions of inclusivity, spanning physical, emotional, and social realms.

Ultimately, the "Creating an Inclusive Haven" guide serves as a comprehensive roadmap for creating environments where every child feels valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.



HOW DOES HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT GOOD FOR CHILDREN ?

A healthy environment at home is crucial for children's well-being and development in several ways:

1. **Physical Health:** A clean and hygienic home environment reduces the risk of illness and promotes physical health. Good ventilation, proper sanitation, and safe living conditions help prevent the spread of diseases and allergies, ensuring that children thrive in a safe space.
2. **Emotional Well-being:** A supportive and nurturing home environment fosters emotional well-being in children. Positive interactions with family members, clear boundaries, and a sense of security create a stable and loving atmosphere where children feel emotionally secure and valued.
3. **Cognitive Development:** A stimulating home environment promotes cognitive development in children. Access to books, educational toys, and opportunities for

exploration and learning encourages intellectual growth and curiosity, laying a strong foundation for future academic success.

4. Social Skills: Interactions within the family unit provide children with opportunities to develop essential social skills. Engaging in conversations, sharing experiences, and resolving conflicts in a respectful manner help children learn communication skills, empathy, and cooperation.

5. Mental Health: A supportive home environment plays a crucial role in children's mental health. Open communication, emotional support, and a sense of belonging contribute to positive self-esteem and resilience, buffering against stress and adversity.

Overall, a healthy home environment nurtures children's physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and mental well-being, setting the stage for their healthy development and future success.

HOW TO KEEP YOUR KID SAFE?

If you or a child are in immediate danger, call Triple Zero (000).

Child abuse is preventable, and all adults have a responsibility to help protect children and young people. The safety of children and young people should always be a priority and this means listening to children and young people, and valuing their views, experiences and participation.

Every adult in Australia has an important role in creating a safe environment for children and young people.

Steps we can all take to create safer environments for children and young people include:

- respecting children and young people and listening to their views and voices
- talking to children and young people about their rights, including their rights to speak up and make a complaint when they feel unsafe or uncomfortable

- ensuring the organisations we engage with promote a culture of child safety and wellbeing, including by implementing the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations
- talking to children in an age appropriate way about body boundaries and understanding and using the correct names for body parts
- understanding what child sexual abuse is and where it occurs
- recognising when a child may be at increased risk, and how we can increase protection
- recognising how a child or young person may behave, talk or change if they have experienced child sexual abuse
- knowing what to do if we think a child or young person is, or is at risk of, being sexually abused
- believing and responding to any direct, indirect or suspected disclosure of child sexual abuse.



Our National Strategy

The National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021-2030 provides a framework for federal, state and territory governments to address child sexual abuse and drive change. The strategy has five themes:

- Awareness raising, education and building child safe cultures
- Supporting and empowering victims and survivors
- Enhancing national approaches to children with harmful sexual behaviours
- Offender prevention and intervention
- Improving the evidence base

You can read the National Strategy for more information about what we're doing to keep children and young people safe. There is also a Guide to the National Strategy for children and young people, designed to assist children and young people to understand child safety and child sexual abuse, recognise the signs of child sexual abuse, and keep themselves and their friends safe.

Helpful resources

Our website contains a number of resources designed to keep children and young people safe, including the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Keeping Our Kids Safe and Speak up and make a complaint. The Guide to the National Strategy for children and young people also contains information about talking with children and young people about body boundaries and using the correct terminology.

Visit the Australian Childhood Foundation- external site website for resources that can help build your ability and confidence to protect children. Their resources include programs designed to support parents to build strong and nurturing relationships with their children.

Online safety

We spend time online every day, and children and young people in Australia are using devices and apps for messaging, education, video games, and more. Many businesses and organisations are also online to interact with children and young people.

When online, children and young people are at risk of being exposed to cyberbullying, inappropriate or harmful content, sextortion and other unwanted contact from strangers. It is important that children and young people, their carers and organisations are equipped to manage and respond to these risks, and prevent harm to children online.

The National Office for Child Safety works with several key government agencies, including the eSafety Commissioner and federal, state and territory police, to help keep children safe online.

The Australian Federal Police- external site (AFP) leads the ThinkUKnow- external site program, which includes a suite of useful resources and information about staying safe online for children, young people and parents and carers.

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH?

Parents and carers play an important role in promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in children. Research shows approximately 1 in 7 children and adolescents aged 4–17 years in Australia experience mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression.

With the prevalence of mental illness in our young ones, it's never too early to start focusing on your child's mental health.



Some factors that may impact a child or young person's mental health include:

- Family dynamics
- A relationship breakup
- Bullying and cyberbullying
- Family history of mental illness
- Low self-esteem and/or body image issues
- Pressure around school, exams, and the future
- Big life changes (e.g. parents separating, moving school or home)
- Traumatic events (e.g. natural disaster, experiencing or witnessing abuse, losing someone close to them).

Adverse mental health can have a significant impact on a child's development, learning, social inclusion, family life, and physical health. We share some ways to help support your child's mental health and how to spot the signs they may need some extra support.

Encourage open communication about feelings

Talking about feelings from a young age can help your child recognise and label their emotions – a powerful tool that can help them better understand and regulate them in healthy ways.

Encourage your child to share how they're feeling and provide validation and support. Telling them to stop crying or to get over it can lead to feelings of shame around their emotions and teach them it's not safe to express themselves around you.



Try to remember that your child isn't giving you a hard time – they're having a hard time.

Some validating statements might include:

- “It's OK to cry.”
- “That sounds really stressful.”
- “How can I help you feel better?”
- “I understand why you're upset.”
- “I can see that made you feel sad.”
- “What might make you feel better?”

Validating your child's feelings will make them feel supported and strengthen the trust in your relationship. It also tells them you're a safe space and they can come to you when they're having a hard time or need advice. This sets the foundation for a strong, close relationship as they grow into an adult.

Model healthy coping skills

Do you find it hard to regulate your emotions sometimes? Imagine how much harder it can be for children.

One of the best ways to help kids deal with big feelings is to show them how you stay calm in stressful or upsetting situations yourself.

Modelling healthy coping strategies to your child from a young age teaches them that it's OK to feel angry, sad, frustrated, and disappointed, but it's important that we try to process and express these feelings in healthy ways.

This might look like:

- **Breathing exercises** – “I'm feeling a bit stressed out because of all the traffic. I'm going to take three big, deep breaths to help me feel calm.”
- **Mindful walking** – “I've had a big day today. I'm going to go for a quiet walk to clear my head.”
- **Journalling** – “My mind feels a bit busy. I'm going to write down my worries to get them out of my head and help me make a plan.”

- **Dancing** – “Dancing makes me happy, so I’m going to put on my favourite song and move my body to get some positive energy going.”
- **Walking away** – “I’m feeling upset right now, so I’m going to walk away until I feel calm enough to talk about it respectfully.”

Your strategies may change based on your child’s age, but these are some examples of coping skills your child may be able to adopt for themselves.

WAYS TO DEVELOP A MINDSET GROWTH OF YOUR KIDS

The opportunities of the future lie with those who have the confidence to spot them and audacity to go after them. “Today, the shift from ‘I’ve got a neat idea’ to ‘I run a billion-dollar company’ is occurring faster than ever,” as Peter Diamandis put it. It starts with a growth mindset, and growth mindsets are developed in childhood. Under-utilised potential exists in adults everywhere you look, but we can get kids off to the right start by being intentional.

A child spends most of their time at home so it’s crucial that it forms a foundation for a growth mindset. “Home should be an enjoyable, happy place where we live, laugh and learn,” explained Hall. His work has shown that “parents who provide a warm and responsive home environment that encourages exploration accelerate their children’s intellectual development.”

Establish routines

Fixed routines might seem like the paradox of a growth mindset, which evokes fluidity, but structure can empower and provide the springboard for possibility. Empowering family routines give the home environment a predictable structure that creates a stable emotional climate. This will support child development and academic success.

The second is intention, where you plan and create your routine together based on your priorities. “Planning activities within a structure requires less conscious thought.” It means the default is that you create and explore, not just switch on the television. It could mean the default is that you make healthy food together, not grab something greasy in a hurry. Planning avoids leaving an empowering routine

to chance. Finally, Hall advised to “pre-empt hurdles to your daily priorities and activities and plan potential solutions.” What if the alarm clock doesn’t go off? What if something comes up? What if you don’t feel like that swimming lesson? Discussing, in advance, how you will handle obstacles can develop the ability to visualise and plan, key components of a growth mindset.

Talk about careers differently

Hall explained there are two ways of talking about careers. One is the occupational paradigm, “concerned with choosing a career path influenced by societal status, circumstances and remuneration.” The other is the vocational paradigm, derived from the Latin word “vocare” which means “calling”. “A career based on the vocation paradigm leads to a fulfilled and transformed life as someone’s work is aligned to their purpose.”

This means a far better question than, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” is “What do you want to do when you grow up?” Or better, “What do you love doing now?” Encouraging someone to explore the “blend of gifts and talents unique to them” is what Hall says leads to happy futures that make tangible impact on the world. Rather than going down a certain path based on an arbitrary job title, a young person thinks in terms of their skills and interests. Rather than “I want to be an electrician” it’s, “I enjoy fixing things. I’m good at solving problems.” Once these interests are developed, they can be applied anywhere, someone isn’t condemned to a fixed path.

Make and track progress

Hall is dyslexic and grew up being labelled an “underachiever” whose ability was four years behind his peers. Rather than accepting this prognosis of his potential, Hall created strategies to improve his academic performance. These strategies led to him achieving GCSEs five grades above what his teachers predicted. Hall’s work now identifies the kinks in the development chain to create a new and improved learning system, unique to each child.

“Whenever a child is underachieving, there is a system malfunction. The job of parents and educators is to identify the broken learning system and replace it with a more effective one,” Hall explained. “This will build a child’s intrinsic motivation,

so they can achieve the grades they are capable of.” Three components Hall said underpin an effective learning system are a “positive state of mind, a learning journal and effective strategies for recalling and applying concepts.”

Developing a growth mindset in a young person can be helped along its way by interventions. An empowering home with established, empowering routines, coupled with working in partnership with the school, can set someone up for success and mean they are motivated to be their best. Talking about careers in terms of vocation rather than occupation, plus making and tracking progress, can start someone’s trajectory in a positive way, ensuring they create habits that will serve their future.

HOME DESIGNS TIPS THAT CAN AFFECT KID POSITIVELY

When it comes to planning your dream renovation its important to make sure your plans include any potential new additions to the family. After all, there’s no faster way to wear out certain parts of the home than by having children running up and down the corridors.

Luckily, planning your renovation with childproof design ideas is easier than you think. We asked interiors expert Shannon Vos to share his top tips for kid-friendly home design.

Kids should feel their home more comfortable for their mental peace and better health. So, there are home design tips for your kids.

The kitchen

This zone is a nightmare to keep clean at the best of times. Short of hiring a full-time cleaner, there are a few steps you can take to ensure the heart of the home is beating smoothly and muck-free.

Anyone with little angels knows the chaos that is the breakfast/before school combo. It is truly a war zone. The best bet here would be a butler’s pantry, if you have the space, or a ‘butler’s cupboard’. This way, all the gear from the morning routine (toaster, bread, kettle, etc) can be easily packed away, leaving your space free of clutter.

Natural stone and marble benchtops are best left to the unencumbered homeowners (so, those without kids). They're too easy to stain and too expensive to be forking out for the little ungratefals.

Instead, consider a composite stone such as Caesarstone, Smartstone or Essastone, as they are a mix of quartz and resin, and virtually indestructible.

A new matt-finish laminate, AbsoluteMatte by Laminex, has a soft, sleek look and a fingerprintproof, scratch-resistant finish.



Grout can become a grime magnet on a tiled splashback. For an easier wipe-up, opt for a single-slab splashback in the same material as your bench or try Beaumont Tiles.

If you're building from new, you'll want your kitchen layout to enable the little tackers to run through, as they tend to do, without tripping you up. This is best achieved with a walk-around island bench or a double-entry galley kitchen layout. Keeping the foot traffic in your kitchen flowing is key to functionality.

Kids love a handle, and the best way to keep their grubby little paws away from your cabinetry is by installing push-to-open drawers and cupboards. At least it will take them a little longer to figure out how to get into every corner of the kitchen.

The Living area

Furniture that serves two purposes can help keep all those toys packed away. Try an ottoman or a sofa with hidden storage inside, or even set aside a few cupboards in the entertainment unit for all things Peppa Pig and the gazillion books.

You can kiss goodbye that lovely velvet or linen lounge you had your heart set on. The cascade of vomit, avocado and smushed blueberries can destroy even the toughest of fabric couches, so leather is the way to go.



Avoid the lighter leathers if you can, and make sure you clean it often and as recommended. Although leather can seem a bit cool, dress up your sofa with plush cushions and plenty of texture. If you're buying a new lounge, pay that little bit extra for the 'no questions asked' warranty. You WILL use it.

Kids' heads seem to be a magnet for sharp corners or a solid edge, so choose furniture that will 'soften the blow' every so often. Selecting a round coffee table, an upholstered arm on the sofa and cabinetry that extends all the way to the walls will save plenty of bumps on the heads of your little treasures.

The bathroom

A smart bathroom layout will be your best friend in here. A wet zone can contain all the water-based fun in one area, preventing you from getting wet feet when you brush your teeth at the end of the night. Try having the shower next to the bath and a glass wall dividing that space from the rest of the room.

Large-format tiles do away with excessive dirt-attracting grout, saving your Saturdays for fun things such as going to dance recitals and footy training instead of scrubbing the bathroom floor. YAY!



Ditch the whole shower/bath combo. Visually it's a mess and it can be dangerous for both young kids and older folk. If you can afford the space, a separate shower and bath ticks plenty of boxes, looks so much better and caters to a busier household.

Glass doors can be a big hazard for kids with slippery hands and feet, so ditching the swinging glass door will be a godsend. Install a fixed glass panel and save on cleaning the hinged edges.

Dark grout on the floor of a tiled bathroom will hide so much more dirt and grime than a lighter grout. You could even take it a step further by committing to an epoxy grout (as opposed to the regular cement-based version). This resin-based grout is much harder and will look better for much longer.

CREATING CHILD FRIENDLY SPACES AT HOME

The elements that work for us, and may inspire you also in creating child-friendly spaces in your home, are as follows:

Create a calm feeling and beautiful surrounding

Less is often more and it helps to keep children's spaces simple.

Light colours on the walls create a sense of space. Windows open allow natural light to flow in. Keep the amount of toys to a small number and present them so they look appealing - in natural woven baskets or wooden trays. Lean towards simpler toys or activities rather than battery operated noise makers.

It's also nice to bring nature indoors to help children appreciate natural beauty.

Adding plants to their playroom or bedroom. And a nature basket where they can display collected pieces from their walks outdoors.

Encourage independence by making daily tasks easy for them to do

Children love independence. And it's often the cause of much parental frustration when children have to do things on their own and we say no due to concern. Which can result in a little meltdown.

But it's important to encourage it and welcome it, as frustrating as it can be. And it can actually help us out once they master everyday skills like getting their breakfast or clearing the table. It also builds confidence.

We can encourage independence by making daily tasks easily accessible to them. Like having plates in a drawer at their level, a step to climb up and reach the bathroom sink, clothes within their reach and so on. And refrain from always correcting how they do it. There will be spills and it won't be the way we do it ourselves, but that's OK. It's how they learn. Just keep demonstrating how it's done ourselves.

Teach them about respecting their surrounding and belongings

One way I encourage this is by teaching our kids to clean up their space themselves. When our kids play with a toy and walk away to start on something

new, I gently remind them that if we are finished with this one then we put it away before bringing out a new one. And I show them where it belongs.

There are exceptions to respecting toys - like how 5 year olds like to crash and smash their trucks. But we know this is to be expected with certain toys. If however they begin to throw coins across the home then I step in and explain they could hit and smash a picture or each other, so they understand.

Observe their interests and have items that help them explore that interest

I think it's so important as a parent to notice and encourage what a child is interested in. To help them master an activity they gravitate towards. And to do this it first comes down to presenting a various selection of activities to them - music, art, construction, motor skills and so on. Observe what they enjoy, and make it easily accessible for them to explore further.

Our son for example currently loves construction. I recently went through his room and stored many items that weren't of interest and cluttered his room. And reduced it to those that he seems to be gravitating towards - like Lego, Superheros and Bruder trucks and cars..

They may get bored after a while, and that's normal too. But it's about giving them an opportunity to play and explore their interests that matters.



HOW TO CREATE A KID-FRIENDLY AND CLEAN HOME ENVIRONMENT?

Are you concerned about the well-being, comfort and safety of your kids? According to the latest studies in Sunshine Coast, the home environment plays a vital role in determining the child's overall development and growth. Being parents, it is your prime responsibility to create a kid-friendly, safe and healthy indoor environment. You should focus on maintaining a dust-free and decluttered living space. It is good to keep the air pollutants, lethal germs, bacteria and disease-causing grime at bay using safe and sound products. Here is a complete guide on building a safe and healthy home atmosphere that can help raise a kid with a positive mindset. Let's Get Started!

Childproofing Is Must

Make childproofing your topmost priority when you have kids at home. Make your abode safer for little ones by removing sharp objects, wires, hazardous chemicals, pesticides and other harmful items. Also, install safety gates on your stairs and cover your windows if they are at a certain height.

Get Rid Of Clutter

Believe it or not! Mess around the rooms can pose a risk of accidents and serious injuries for kids. Whether doing a regular house cleaning or preparing for a budget bond cleaning Sunshine Coast, it is good to de-clutter your rooms systematically.



You can eliminate unwanted household items, such as expired food contents, makeup, broken items, outdated furniture and electronic devices. Go through each room and list items you want to donate or discard. Ultimately, de-cluttering can help you create a spacious, safe and healthy home for your kids.

Keep Things Organised

Allow your children to learn good things from you. Being parents, it is your responsibility to instil good habits in your kids. You can begin by organising your home. You can begin with organising your home. For instance:



- Assign specific spots for books and toys
- Use baskets to keep things organised
- Encourage your kids to put toys, books and other stuff in their designated places.
- Use storage units, drawers and shelves for knickknacks

Minimise Exposure To Dust Particles

Dust mites, pollen, dead skin cells, and other loose debris accumulated on surfaces like ceiling fans, shelves, window blinds, upholstery furniture and carpets can lead

to various respiratory problems. Since children have sensitive respiratory systems, they can easily get cold and flu due to dirt and dust. If you are concerned about the health of your little ones, regularly dust your home using the proper tools. Use microfiber dust to clean hard surfaces. It can help you fetch tiny dust particles with ease. For furniture and floor coverings, use a HEPA-filtered vacuum cleaner as it can suck 99.9 per cent dust and germs without giving you a hint of stress. You can also follow effective dusting strategies if you are suffering from allergies and maintain good health and home environment.



Disinfect Your Home Regularly

Exposure to invisible guests, such as e.Coli, COVID-19, and other pathogens can cause foodborne illnesses, respiratory disorders, skin infections and other chronic diseases. If you want to keep your kids safe and sound, regularly clean and disinfect your home, especially high-touched areas, including:

- Doorknobs
- Light switches
- Handles of Kitchen appliances and cabinets
- Laptops and phones
- Remote control
- Windows
- Sinks and faucets

- Toilet Flush
- Pet bowls
- Kid's toys
- Floors

If you are preparing your rented accommodation for the final inspection, do proper research and book the best bond cleaning Sunshine Coast professionals for the easy retrieval of bond money.

Prepare Green Cleaning Products

You should learn the importance of green cleaning because Regular exposure to harmful chemicals can cause various health problems. So, the best thing is to prepare DIY cleaning products at home. Let your kids assist you in the process. You can use white vinegar, essential oils, water, baking soda and other natural cleaning products to keep your house clean and healthy.

Motivate Your Kids For Cleaning



Get your kids involved in the house cleaning chores from an early age. Start by assigning them age-based tasks, such as folding clothes, picking up messes, wiping down tables, etc. To keep them motivated, convert boring tasks into fun activities

by adding a hint of competition or a treasure hunt-like game. This will help you main a clean abode all day long.

Keep Shoes Outside A Home

Toddlers crawl on the floor and can put anything in their mouths without giving you a chance to stop them. They may come into contact with germs that can cause serious health problems. So, the best thing you can do is to make a rule of keeping shoes outside the house or in a mudroom. This will prevent dust, dirt and germs from lurking on the floors. You can consider the best tips to clean your floating floorboards and other flooring to keep your house clean and germ-free.

Ventilate Your Home Regularly

Good ventilation can keep allergens at bay while promoting a healthy and positive atmosphere. So, keep your windows open for at least 5 to 10 minutes every day, especially in your bedroom where the toddler sleeps. Creating a proper flow of air keeps pollutants at bay and keeps your kids feeling energetic and motivated. You can also book professionals for a quality bond cleaning Sunshine Coast because they clean every nook and cranny according to the approved checklist and help you get your bond back.



Wrapping Up!

These are some of the key tips and tricks to help you create a kid-friendly, healthy and comfortable abode. However, it is imperative to remember that house cleaning and maintenance is a continuous effort to boost your kids' overall growth and development.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, crafting a welcoming environment for kids is not just about physical space but also about fostering a culture of inclusivity, empathy, and respect. By prioritizing accessibility, diversity representation, and emotional well-being, educators, caregivers, and community leaders can create environments where every child feels valued and supported.



The journey to creating such spaces requires continuous learning, reflection, and collaboration. It involves recognizing and addressing individual needs, celebrating diversity, and promoting positive social interactions. Moreover, empowering children to express themselves authentically and providing them with opportunities for learning and growth are essential aspects of creating welcoming environments.

Ultimately, the goal is to cultivate spaces where children feel safe, respected, and empowered to thrive. By implementing the strategies outlined in this guide and remaining committed to inclusivity and continuous improvement, we can create environments that not only meet the needs of children but also enrich their lives and contribute to their overall well-being and success. Together, we can build a brighter future where every child feels seen, heard, and valued.

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