



Community Connection and kids/ Importance of Connection

There are huge benefits in regard to positive mental health when we have close supportive connections around us and in the community where we live. Research shows that children with strong links to others do well in life. Traditionally families would spend lots of time with their extended relatives including aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, etc., which creates a 'mini' community for kids to grow up in. This occurs less frequently these days in Australia and so it can be good to recruit friends, neighbours and other peoples' relatives for birthdays or get together to create a sense of community at home.

- » Keep in mind that your friends don't have to have children to be part of a family. Couples without kids or single people are still someone's daughter/son/cousin, etc. and can contribute a great deal to children's lives.
- » Take a broad view of the word 'family', these days they come in all shapes and sizes and often change over time. Friends are the family we choose for ourselves.
- » If the opportunity arises down the track let kids have a go at things like Meals on Wheels or soup kitchens, so they can gain insight into the different needs people have.

In the early days when you have a newborn it is really important that you as the parents connect with others. It can be all too easy to stay in the house; however it is very important not to isolate yourself during this transitional time. Try to connect with someone at least once day whether it is by phone, email or a coffee catch up. Having a taste of your usual life before children can help you keep perspective even when totally deprived of sleep!