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### Need to talk? Call 1800 882 436.

It's a free call with a maternal child health nurse. \*call charges may apply from your mobile

### Is it an emergency? Dial 000

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## Cultural differences when raising children

4-minute read



Your cultural background can affect how you parent, how you understand your children and how you teach them. When people from different cultures become parents, it is normal for them to have different opinions about how to raise children.

### How cultural differences affect parenting

People from different cultures have different relationships with their children. For example, some cultures expect children to be quiet and always respect their elders, while other cultures encourage children to speak up and be independent. If you and your partner are from different cultures, you might have different ideas about issues like discipline, who looks after the children, sleeping arrangements, food, and how much time you spend with your children.

It is important for children to feel secure with the adults who look after them. It is also important for children to know their culture. Sometimes children who live in homes where there are 2 cultures can become confused and stressed. They might feel they have to choose one culture over the other. It is important for you to agree on what is right so your children feel they belong to both cultures. This will help them feel better about themselves and learn better.

### Cultural differences in Australia

You might notice differences in how children are raised in Australia compared with what you are used to. You also might notice differences in how Australian parents show affection to their children, how independent children are, attitudes towards physical punishment and children's responsibility to their family or community.

These differences can affect how your children view your parenting style and can cause tension as your children grow older. There might be conflict in your family, for example between you and the [grandparents](#). You might also worry that your children will lose traditional values when they are exposed to Australian media, schools and other children.

### Tips for dealing with cultural clashes in the family

It is common for parents to disagree sometimes about how to raise a child. Communication is the key to overcoming these differences. Regardless of your cultural background, you should [talk to your partner](#) about how you want the family to be.

If you and your partner come from different cultural backgrounds, discuss which traditions and values you would like your family to follow. If you disagree, try to find the middle ground. Once you have agreed on a united plan, it is important to discuss your decisions with [other family members](#), such as grandparents. Set boundaries to avoid problems later on.

### Tips for overcoming cultural clashes

- Try to find creative ways to raise your child in 2 cultures. For example, speak to your child in [more than one language](#), tell them stories about your culture and involve them in traditional celebrations.
- Support your partner and work as a team. Let family members know you have discussed an issue and that you agree on what is best for your child.
- Understand that family members want the best for you and your child, even if you do not agree with their views and advice. Let them know you appreciate the good things they bring to the relationship.
- Learn about [parenting in Australia](#) and what the expectations are in this country.
- Be flexible and listen to your children.
- Be patient and seek support.

### Cultural differences in Australia's health and child care system



Australia is a multicultural society. That means everyone is free to express and share their culture.

However, sometimes you may notice cultural differences when your child goes to child care or to the doctor or other health service. You might not quite understand what to do, and your child may be confused by different practices outside the home.

If this is the case, talk to [child care](#) and/or health care staff about your family's cultural needs. Staff will be able to support you better when they understand and respect your culture.

## Where to go for advice

Call Pregnancy, Birth and Baby on 1800 882 436 for support and advice. You can use the [Translating and Interpreting Service](#) to call.

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### Sources:

[Australian Institute of Family Studies](#) (*Differential parenting of children from diverse cultural backgrounds attending child care*), [Department of Home Affairs](#) (*Multicultural affairs*), [Kids Matter](#) (*Cultural diversity: suggestions for families and educators*), [Kids Matter](#) (*Supporting cultural diversity*), [Practical Parenting](#) (*Dealing with a culture clash*)

Learn more here about the [development and quality assurance of healthdirect content](#).

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Healthdirect Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners and to Elders both past and present.

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