

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

www.parentline.org.au



Helping Children Cope with Global Recession

REMEMBER:

- *Children need reassurance.*
- *Keep communication open but age-appropriate.*
- *Remember you're the adult.*
- *Show them you are in control.*
- *Help children see the positives.*
- *Ask questions.*
- *Let children help where they can.*
- *Put things in context.*

The global recession is making headlines in the press everyday. Children can experience a lot of anxiety and fear when they hear these kinds of headlines in the news.

The global recession has impacted everyone in our society. We have all been affected either directly or indirectly. For families where the primary wage earner is unemployed it is particularly difficult. For example, it has been estimated that unemployment in Australia will rise from 4.5 per cent to 6 per cent during 2009.

So how much do we share with our children? Obviously this will depend on where they are at developmentally. The most important thing is for our children to feel safe. Here are some basic tips on how parents can lighten the load for their children:

Provide Reassurance

The most important thing parents can do is reassure their children that everything will be OK and that it's their role as parents to look after these issues. Children, even teenagers, look to parents to know that they will be provided for and to make sure their parents have things under control. However it is not always easy to sound confident when you are worried about the future.

Keep Communication Open

It is okay to let your child know you're frustrated about the situation; however it is important to make sure you make it clear you're dealing with it.

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Remember You're the Adult

Above all, don't look to your kids for reassurance or comfort. As a parent, your job is to communicate that you're working on finding solutions. In situations like this, children of all ages need to know that even if things are difficult now, you will do your best to work things out in the long run.

Don't lean on children for support. Sometimes this can be tempting, especially with older children and for single parents. Find support elsewhere; friends, family or professionals such as the Parent Line counsellors.

Show Them that You are in Control.

Make sure your children understand that you are doing everything to make things better. Be prepared to make the hard decisions without including the children.

Help Them See the Benefits

Help your children see it's not all bad. You may be home more, for instance, or able to spend more time with them. Or you may have the opportunity to find something you really love to do. You can tell children you will try to minimise what they have to give up but also you can remind them that you can have fun doing less expensive things.

Ask Questions

Listen to your children and watch their behaviour. Let your child know they can approach you with concerns or questions any time. Also tell them that you will keep them informed as the situation changes.

Let Them Help

Many children see themselves as part of the family "team." If they want to contribute, you can ask them for ideas on what can be cut back. For example, ask them for ideas on cheaper family holidays, activities and meals etc.

Put It in Context

Remind your child that lots of people are going through the same thing. They'll feel better knowing they and their parents are not alone.

How We Can Help

If you would like to discuss this issue in more detail, or any other parenting issues or concerns, call us.

Parent Line Counsellors are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We provide a free, professional, confidential service to all parents and carers of children across NSW.

Phone **1300 1300 52**