

## Equal Parenting

Over the course of a child or young person's life, their needs, wants and aspirations will change. Whilst this change can sometimes cause stress for the child or young person and other family members, it is important to remember that change is a normal part of healthy development.

For more information specifically about the developmental stages of children and young people in your family please visit <http://raisingchildren.net.au>

During significant periods of change, such as the diagnosis of an illness in a child or young person in the family, parents and other family members will often rally around an individual in the family to provide them with love, support and attention.

Whilst this level of individual support is helpful in the short term, in the long term it can result in a number of possible consequences. These consequences could include:

1. Disempowering the child or young person living with the diagnosed illness;
2. Siblings fighting for the attention of their parents and/or other family members; and
3. Development of feelings of resentment within the family and other forms of emotional distress.

For this reason, parents and other family members are encouraged to consider how they will work together to support their loved one with the illness in a manner that is equal to other children and young people in the family.

### Equal Parenting Strategies

Some strategies to support parents and family members to share their time equally with each other include:

#### ***Try to balance the time spent with all children and young people within the family***

Having some special 'one-on-one' time with each child or young person within the family is valuable for building their self-esteem and resilience.

#### ***Set limits and consequences fairly across all family members***

Involve children and young people in the family when setting limits and consequences for your family. Be clear and reach agreement about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

#### ***Praise your family members when they do stick to agreed rules***

When family members behave within the limits set by the family, recognise this and provide praise.

***Be willing to discuss and modify rules as circumstances change***

When setting and monitoring rules within the family it is important to be flexible, hear the thoughts of others, and incorporate the point of view of other family members.

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