

insights



Top five strategies to improve your parenting this year

by Michael Grose

The start of the year is a great time for making changes and improvements to the way you raise kids. But it's difficult to know where to begin.

To assist with the change process we've carefully selected five practical strategies that will have a positive impact if acted upon. We've organised webinars in the first half of the year to assist you to implement each strategy.

1. Switch on your child's strengths

Most of us have been conditioned to focus on what kids can't do. There is a better way. The Positive Psychology movement led by US-based psychologist Dr. Martin Seligman showed that when we can unearth kids' strengths we are, in effect, unlocking their true potential for success and happiness. Three elements come together to make a strength and parents need to be mindful of all three: performance (being good at something); energy (feeling good doing it); and high use (choosing to do it).

[Professor Lea Waters](#), author of the wonderful new book *The Strength Switch* and current President of the [International Positive Psychology Association](#) will show you how to focus on kids' strengths in her webinar '[Switching on your child's strengths](#)'.

2. Balance kids' extra-curriculum activities

Alongside social media and news events, being busy is now recognised as a major stressor for many children and young people. The choice of activities to keep kids busy after school hours is mind-boggling.

Having so many options is wonderful but it does place a new set of pressures on parents and kids. The cost of loading kids up with scheduled activities is that many don't get the chance for free play, or simply 'vegging out' on the couch.

Parenting Ideas expert [Dr. Jodi Richardson](#) will help you find the right balance of activity for your family in her webinar '[Balancing extra-curricular activities](#)'.

3. Focus on friendships

Friendships are an important part of the road to adulthood for a child or young person. Friendships can also be

problematic. Not every child is naturally outgoing and makes friends easily. If your child has difficulty forming friendships and is worried by that, then there are many ways to approach this including: encouraging kids to spend one-on-one time with others, making extra-curricular activities fit their interests, and coaching kids to develop friendly behaviours.

The wonderful [Sharon Witt](#) will conduct a webinar '[Teach girls to build each other up](#)', focusing on friendship skills especially for parents of girls.

4. Give kids tools to manage anxious moments

Currently we have a childhood anxiety problem. A big one! And it's mostly undetected as community understanding of anxiety is low. It's our experience at Parenting Ideas that many parents are anxious and they don't know it, and many children routinely experience anxiety, which goes unrecognised.

Parenting Ideas founder Michael Grose is conducting a webinar '[Managing your child's anxiety](#)' to help parents on this challenging but important topic.

5. Develop rights of passage

Community changes have largely eradicated many traditional rights of passage, making it harder for a young person to know when they've become an adult.

Fortunately, many families are now creating their own to mark events such as the end of primary school, the move into the teenage years, and mark different stages of adolescence. These traditions are now becoming legitimate rights of passage for young people.

Internationally recognised expert on rites of passage Arne Rubenstein will outline practical ways you can recognise a young person's important life markers in his webinar '[Creating 21st century rites of passage](#)'.

Will anything be different this year?

Change and improvement in anything worthwhile generally comes incrementally rather than in one giant leap. We've pointed you in the right parenting to take this year. With our webinars we've made it easy to take that vital first step. Have a great parenting year.



Michael Grose

Michael Grose, founder of Parenting Ideas, is one of Australia's leading parenting educators. He's the author of 10 books for parents including *Thriving!* and the best-selling *Why First Borns Rule the World* and *Last Borns Want to Change It*, and his latest release *Spoonfed Generation: How to raise independent children*.