

Advice from Latrobe Valley Parents.



We surveyed over 400 parents from across the Latrobe Valley to find out about their journey to becoming a parent and what relationship advice they had for first time parents.

Here is what they told us —

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| The most significant life changes since becoming a parent: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time — not enough of it• Loss of sleep• Not getting a break• Relationship breakdowns and becoming a single parent• Financial stress |
| Places where parents received information regarding relationship changes following the birth of a child: <i>Note - Many parents told us they received no information regarding relationship changes.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Antenatal classes• New parent groups• Maternal Child Health/midwife• Hospital pamphlets• Internet — social media, websites, pregnancy apps• <i>What Were We Thinking!</i>• Informal — friends and family |
| Important learnings from becoming a new parent: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The difficult times don't last.• Treat your child with respect and let their voice be heard as they grow older.• Where possible, stop and enjoy the small moments.• Keep cream, teething gel and Panadol at hand always.• Pick your battles. Some things you just need to let go and laugh in the moment... you can clean it up later.• For now, enjoy the joy.• Be patient.• You are not a bad parent, you are a good parent having a bad day.• As a first-time parent, ask for help when you need it.• Parenting is hard. |

What new parents do together to build a stronger relationship:

- Spend time together as a couple not just as parents.
- Watch a movie together.
- Text each other during the day.
- Communicate.
- Let go of gender typical roles and work as a team.
- Share a meme.
- Go for a walk together with the baby.
- Sit down and make a plan of what you both expect from each other, include how you will parent the child so you are both on the same page.
- Couples counselling.
- Keep the lines of communication open and talk to one another. Be honest. Let each other know how you're feeling — good or bad.
- Have date nights.
- Cuddle! Find the time to embrace one another and remember you're in it together.
- Create family routines and rituals. Scheduling fun and joy into the week, even in small doses, is so important.



**Latrobe Health
Assembly**

An initiative of the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone.