

Discipline must not harm Parents are not allowed to discipline in a way that could seriously harm their child. Discipline must be reasonable. If you hit and leave bruises on your child, or hit them in the head the police could charge you with a crime. You should not hit your children with anything, including household items or weapons.

If you need to discipline your children, you could look at taking things that they value away. For example, you could take away x-box or playstation for the night, or no TV for the day or you could remove their mobile phones from them for 2 hours. These are alternative methods of discipline. It is good for parents to have a say and control in their children's lives.

The law says the government Child Safety Services can get involved if children are at risk of significant harm. Harm can be physical, mental, emotional or sexual. It can be one act or a series of acts. If Child Safety Services hears that parents might be harming their children they will visit and check. In serious cases Child Safety may go to court and ask for a Child Protection Order. You should get legal advice quickly

Criminal age

A person aged **10 to 13** can be charged with a crime if it can be proved they knew what they were doing was wrong. From 14 this doesn't have to be proved. Children **under 18** are dealt with in the Children's Court for crimes. From 18 years, they will attend the adult courts.

Legal help: Legal Aid Queensland - 1300 651 188

This is legal information only. Not legal advice. See a lawyer or migration agent for specific legal advice



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In partnership with Queensland Police Service

Law and Parenting in Queensland



GROWING TOGETHER

Here are some of the main laws in Queensland about parents raising their children.

Being a good parent is providing for their needs with love and support and building a lifelong trusting relationship.

Parents must protect and provide

The law says parents, and carers, must:

- **protect their children from harm**
- **provide food, clothing, medical needs and a place to live**
- **make sure they go to school till 16, or end of Year 10, and some further education or training till 17.**

Parents are legal guardian of their children up till 18 and can make decisions for them.

The law says children under 12 must not be left alone. But even after they turn 12, parents must make sure they are supervised if the child is not yet responsible enough to be left alone.



Parents can set rules and discipline

The law says parents must protect their children. Parents should discuss and set rules and boundaries for their children so they don't come to harm. The law allows parents to use 'reasonable discipline' or consequences, to try to teach their children to do the right thing.

What is 'reasonable discipline'?

Reasonable discipline might be things like stopping your child doing something or taking away things they like for a while. Praising good behaviour will encourage children to do more good behaviour. Showing (modelling) your children good behaviour can be effective. If parents show equal respect to others and work out conflicts peacefully, that will encourage children to do the same in their relationships with others in the future.

When children challenge

Challenging parents is normal. Children need to know that the law says their parents must care for them and so parents can set rules and give consequences to protect them. Be calm and confident that the law gives you authority to set rules and enforce them. Reason with your child - explain to them the reason for the rule. As your children get older, the more the rules should be talked about and agreed together. See the challenges from your child as a chance to show them that in good relationships you can each freely talk about your different views without fear. Set 'Talk time' if you can't deal with the problem now, make a time to talk with your child. Rather than ignore it or getting aggressive. Be consistent - enforce the rules at all times and not just when it is convenient. However you might sometimes let small things go.



It is important to keep your children busy with activities and engaged with their schooling and sporting commitments. Finding out what interests your children (for example, soccer or basketball) and enrolling them is important. Helping them attend training and maintaining involvement will help them stay engaged.

- **Get the kids outdoors**
- **Assign household chores**
- **Limit screen time** (this includes TV, games, phones and tablets)
- **Set Realistic goals** (for example, working towards a trade/traineeship/apprenticeship or sport)