

# Positive Parenting Cards

Parenting can be delightful, difficult, funny, heart-breaking and enormously rewarding. It may be the very best—and the most challenging—thing you have ever done. If you are very fortunate, the highs and lows are interspersed with precious glimpses of what an incredible privilege being a parent is.

As the publishing arm of St Luke's (now a division of Anglicare Victoria), Innovative Resources is currently developing a set of 40 cards called *Positive Parenting* with family support worker, Lorraine Leitch. The cards are due for release in April/May 2015.

In family services work at St Luke's we attempt to apply the best practice principles arising from solution-focused brief therapy, narrative therapy, intensive family services and strengths-based practice. At its simplest this practice philosophy revolves around the questions:

- Is it more useful to understand problems or seek solutions?
- Is hearing parent's best hopes for the future more helpful than looking for causes of the problem?
- What are the most efficient ways of generating change and growth?
- How can we best value parents own expertise?
- What happens when we assume parents have good intentions?

The central belief is that knowing a person's strengths, skills, resources and future hopes is more useful than knowing what someone can't do. The so called 'strengths approach' does not ignore the problems and issues a parent might be struggling with, but attempts to employ a person's own qualities and assets to identify solutions that work for them.



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And these strengths often occur through storytelling.

The *Positive Parenting* cards will be a wonderful tool for opening up conversations and storytelling with parents about their experiences, struggles, ideas, and hopes for their children and for themselves as parents.

Each card features an original line drawing by artist Anna Marrone, of an everyday object that can be found in many family homes, such as a toaster, a ball, a shoe, a pet's bowl, a sandwich, a toothbrush or a garden spade. Accompanying the line drawing is a sentence starter to get the conversation rolling, for example:

- I was proud of my children when ...
- Something I find difficult as a parent is ...
- As a parent, I was really surprised when ...
- A good thing about my family is ...

We hope that this set of cards will be at home around the kitchen table, in meetings, in parenting workshops, out-of-home care reviews and in any family skill building event, no matter how diverse the make-up and style of families may be.

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