

Parenting Group Referral Guide.

Bringing Up Great Kids (BUGK) Suite

Focus: Reflection, Mindfulness, and Patterns of Communication.

Program	Target Age	Purpose
BUGK (Standard)	Parents of kids 2–12	The ‘Why’: Uses the metaphor of ‘Messages’ to explore how a parent’s own upbringing influences their current style. It’s about slowing down and being mindful.
BUGK Parenting Adolescents	Parents of kids 10–17	The ‘Transition’: Helps parents move from the role of ‘ Custodian ’ (manager) to ‘ Consultant ’ (guide). Focuses on adolescent brain development and staying connected during the "push-away" phase.
Parenting & Mental Health	Parents of kids 0–18	The ‘Oxygen Mask’: Blends mindful parenting with mental health care. Focuses on understanding childhood messages across all ages, while building self-compassion and emotional regulation strategies when managing a mental illness alongside parenting.

Best for parents who: Are reactive or stressed and need to understand the *origins* of their parenting behaviour. It is less about discipline techniques and more about the relationship heart.

Tuning in to Kids (TIK) Suite

Focus: Emotional Intelligence and ‘Emotion Coaching’.

Program	Target Age	Purpose
Tuning in to Toddlers	Parents of kids 18m–3	The ‘Regulation’: Specifically, for the terrible twos stage. Focuses on helping parents manage their own frustration while teaching toddlers how to label big feelings.
Tuning in to Kids	Parents of kids 2–10	The ‘Foundation’: Teaches the 5 steps of Emotion Coaching. It helps parents view a child’s anger or sadness as an <i>opportunity for connection</i> rather than a problem to be fixed.
Tuning in to Teens	Parents of kids 10–18	The ‘Connection’: Focuses on Emotional Intelligence in the context of autonomy. Helps parents stay calm when teens are explosive and teaches collaborative problem-solving.

Best for parents who: Dismiss or feel overwhelmed by their child's emotions. It’s perfect for families where behavioural issues are actually emotional expression issues.

Circle of Security (COSP)

Focus: Attachment Theory and the "Map" of Needs.

Program	Target Age	Purpose
COSP	Parents of kids 4mths -6	Uses a visual map (The Circle) to help parents identify what a child needs in any given moment - whether they need a Secure Base to go out and explore or a Safe Haven to come back for comfort. Key Concept: "Shark Music." This helps parents identify the 'background noise' (fear or discomfort) that prevents them from meeting their child's needs.

Best for parents who: Struggle with the push-pull of attachment. If a parent is confused by why their child is clingy one minute and defiant the next, COSP provides the literal map to understand it.

Quick Referral Decision Matrix.

IF YOU HEAR THE PARENT SAY...	REFER TO...
"I don't know why I get so angry, I'm just like my mother."	BUGK (Focuses on origin of style)
"They just scream for no reason, and it drives me crazy!"	TIK / Toddlers (Focuses on emotion coaching)
"I feel like I'm losing my child; we just fight all the time."	Tuning in to Teens (Focuses on connection)
"I feel like my child is trying to manipulate me or push my buttons."	Circle of Security (Reframes behaviour as a need)
"I want to be a different kind of parent than what I had."	BUGK (Focuses on breaking cycles)

Is My Consumer Group Ready?

The Readiness Checklist

If you can tick most of these boxes, they are ready for a group environment.

- ☐ **Crisis is managed:** Basic needs (housing, safety, food) are relatively stable.
 - ☐ **Regular attendance:** They consistently show up for home visits and appointments.
 - ☐ **Curiosity over Compliance:** They ask "why" their child behaves a certain way, rather than just "how do I stop it?"
 - ☐ **Desire for Connection:** They have mentioned feeling isolated or "the only one."
 - ☐ **Regulation:** They can discuss difficult topics without becoming overwhelmed or highly reactive.
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When to Wait (1:1 Support is Better)

Group work may be counter-productive or even harmful if the parent is currently experiencing:

Barrier	Why Wait?
Acute Crisis	The parent won't have the headspace to absorb or reflect on new concepts.
Extreme Social Anxiety	The fear of the group will block any actual learning or connection.
Active Trauma/Grief	Raw, unprocessed trauma can lead to the parent flooding the group or becoming triggered by others.
High Hostility	If they are in a blame mindset toward their child or others, they may disrupt the safety of the group.

If you would like to discuss the suitability of a consumer,
contact us at: groupwork.south@vt.unitnig.org or 9704 8377



Parenting Groups.

Join a parenting group for practical strategies and support.

We can help if you are looking for support to:

- Develop your parenting skills
- Build confidence as a parent

We offer free group programs to provide support and information to strengthen parent-child relationships and provide practical knowledge and skills development to support you with the challenges of parenting.

Our groups create a safe space for you to build connections with other parents. Engaging with others through parenting groups and sharing common issues with other parents can help to build on your support network and reduce any feelings of isolation.

These groups are available exclusively to caregivers living in the City of Casey, Cardinia Shire, or Greater Dandenong.

Further Information:

To learn more about the parenting groups we offer in the **City of Casey**, **Cardinia Shire**, and **Greater Dandenong**, and to receive updates about upcoming sessions, please click the link below or scan the QR code to register your interest.

<https://forms.office.com/r/NaLZl39cqa>



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