

Routines are important

Whilst it may not be possible straight away, returning to familiar routines offers comfort and safety to your children. Watching a favourite TV show, enjoying preferred foods, or visiting familiar places can provide comfort and safety. If space is limited, establish a 'wind down' routine with activities like reading, drawing, or doing puzzles together to maintain bedtime routines.

Take care of yourself

Give yourself some time to process what your family is going through. Allowing yourself enough time to process what you are going through will make it easier to help your children make sense of their own complex feelings.

Support is available

During this time, holding your children's and your own emotional wellbeing may feel overwhelming. The Together4Kids Program can provide you with a one-off face to face support for yourself and your family.

What does Together4Kids support look like?

We can support you with strategies and resources over the phone before coming out to the motel (or visiting one of our offices if you wish) and facilitating a fun activity with you and your children to strengthen your connection.

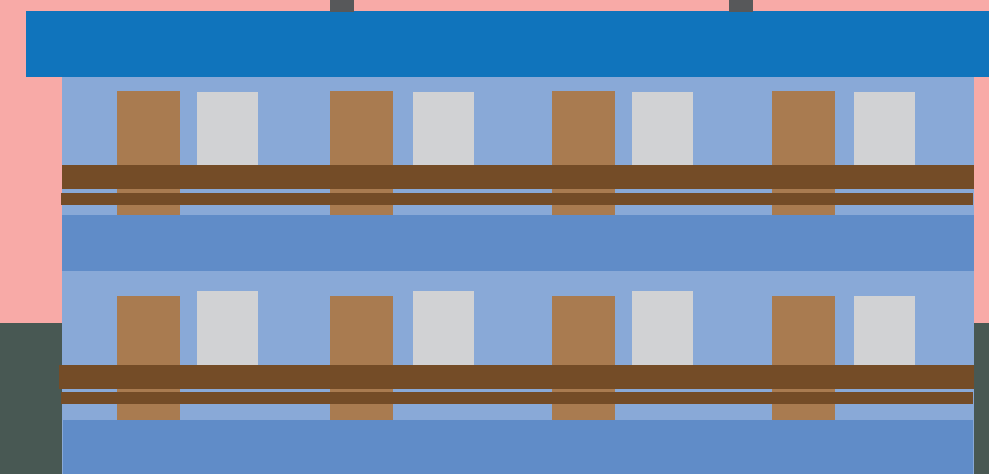
Depending on the age of the child and their needs, we can also provide your children with strategies and tools to support them with big feelings.

We also provide 14 Week Programs if families identify that they could benefit from further support.

How can I get support from Together4Kids?

- Ask your case manager to put through a referral to our service
- Give us a call on (08) 8245 8190
- Visit www.rasa.org.au for more information

Tips for Parents Living in Motel Accommodation



We acknowledge the strength of parents and caregivers who live with children in motel accommodation. We see the creative ways parents/caregivers support their children in these spaces and we know that it is hard work. We hope that this resource can support you to better understand how and why your child may be behaving differently than usual and give you some tips to help you during your stay in motel accommodation.

Help your children make sense of what is happening

Children may feel curious or concerned about life changes. Reassure them that these changes are temporary and encourage them to express their worries.

Let your kids know you're there for them, providing both physical and emotional support. Create a safe space for them to share their feelings, making it easier for them to adapt.

Some children may believe they caused family changes. It's important to let them know it's not their fault, and that you are there to support them.

What you may see from children living in a motel

Age regression

Children might revert to old habits like thumb sucking, wetting pants, talking differently, or wanting to be with their parents all the time, due to big changes.

These are normal reactions. Respond calmly and kindly; your child may feel shy or worried sharing these behaviours.

Sleep disruption and feeling sick

Children may struggle with sleep, stomach aches or headaches, especially if they're too young to express feelings.

To help, read stories, play music, cuddle, and offer comfort foods. They may need kind words and hugs for reassurance.

Big behaviours

During significant changes, children may display intense feelings and behaviours. These could manifest as anger and outbursts due to worries and confusion.

Stay calm when your child has strong emotions. Acknowledge their feelings and assure them of your support to enhance their sense of safety.

"Would you like a hug from me?"

"Do you need me to give you some space right now?"

"Would you like me to stay with you?"

When your child has strong feelings, they might not express their needs clearly. Check in with them later to ask how you can help next time. Suggestions include deep breaths, a comforting toy, sensory toys such as play-dough or a stress ball, or activities like pushing against a sturdy wall to release tension.

Withdrawing

Some children won't express their feelings verbally or physically; they may be quiet, sleep more, present with stomach aches, or seem zoned out.

Getting active can be useful for children who are withdrawn; take a walk or spend time outdoors. Provide options like drawing or writing to help them express feelings if words are challenging.

It is important to remember...

Every child is different!

Children react uniquely to events, even if they share the same experiences. Some may become quieter or withdrawn, while others may act out.

Regularly check in with your children and reassure them that they can come to you for support.

"We have been living here a little while now. I wanted to know how you have been feeling about it."

"I wanted you to know that I am here if you ever feel like you want to talk or need a hug."

"You had some big feelings earlier, how are you feeling now? What can we do next time you feel like this?"