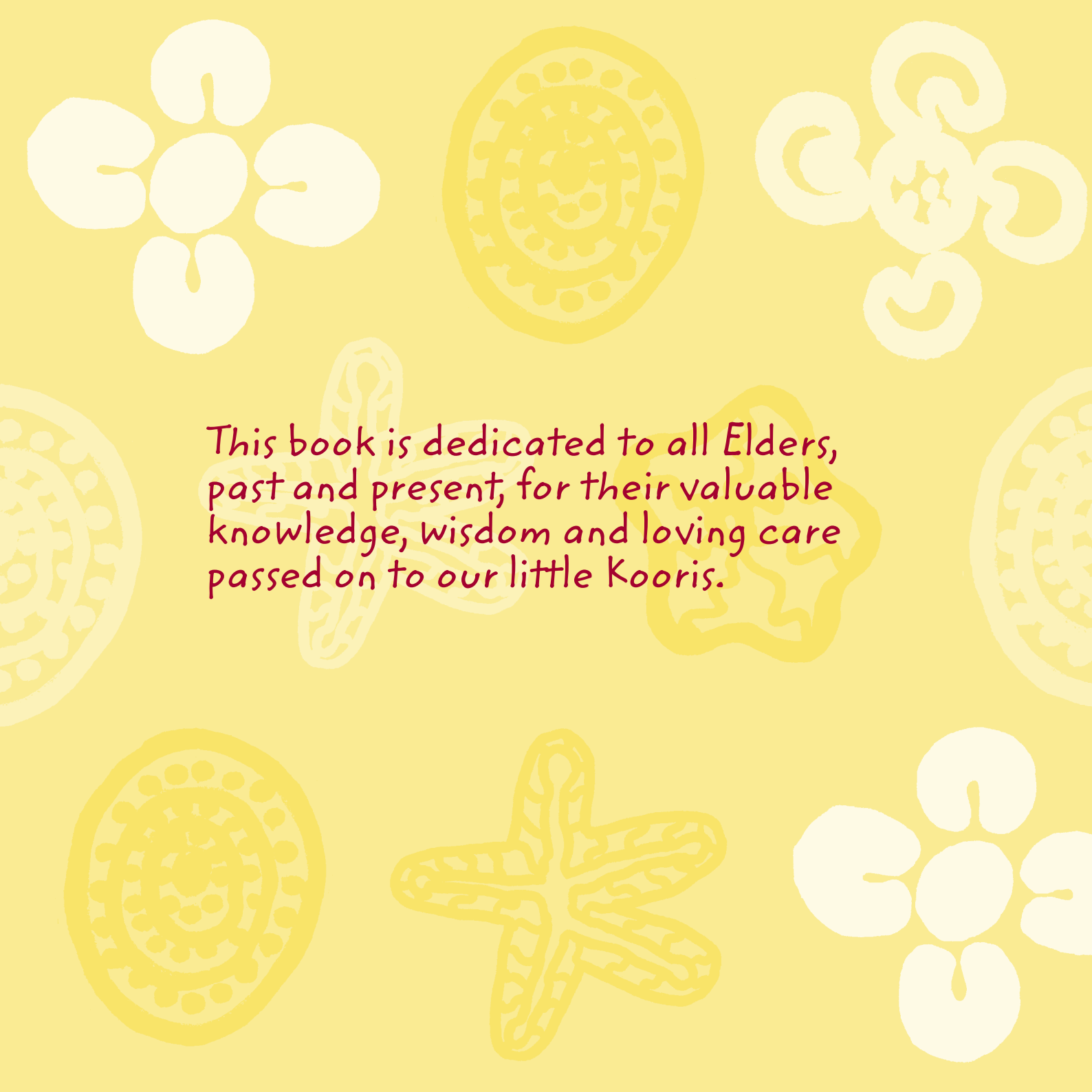




Growing Up
Strong Kooris



*This book is dedicated to all Elders,
past and present, for their valuable
knowledge, wisdom and loving care
passed on to our little Kooris.*

“Stand up straight and be proud and strong
This is our country, this is where we belong
Do not listen to any discrimination
We must rebuild the Koori nation
To do this we must first believe
Teach the young people to achieve...”

from 'The Tracker' by John Llewellyn Watkins 1994

Growing Up
Strong Kooris

Acknowledgements

This book has been adapted from the Far North Coast Aboriginal Parenting book, *Doordarnbee Muggy Jarjums*

Thank you to the Elders and community members, the Metro South West Aboriginal Child, Youth & Family Strategy Executive Committee, and The Echidna Group Indigenous Research & Development Consultancy for their work in developing this book.

Special thanks to all the families that gave their time to be photographed for this book, as well as the Yongurra Playgroup (Miller Public School) and The Guring Gang (Bankstown Community Resource Group) for their help and support.

Special thanks also to the Kula N' Gadu Local Artists for providing the illustrations used in this book. 'Kula N' Gadu' means 'I feel so good' like the feeling you have when oppressive heat is lifted by a swim on a hot day, in Dharawal (as given by Fran Bodkin).

Our appreciation to Contact Inc. for their parenting resources which have been invaluable in the development of this book. For more information about Contact Inc call (02) 9251 4431.

This book was funded through the Aboriginal Child, Youth & Family Strategy, a NSW Government initiative supporting Aboriginal families and children.

More information:

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(Metro South West)
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Illustrations: Wendy Lotter and
the Kula N' Gadu Local Artists

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Aboriginal
Child, Youth
and Family
Strategy



Proud communities
Strong families

Introduction

This book is a resource for Aboriginal and Family Workers in the South West Sydney region of NSW.

Between the ages of 0 and 5 our baby Kooris' brains and bodies are developing and growing fast. This first stage of life is the most important time for parents to spend with their little Kooris and make sure that they get a good start in life.

Our little Kooris need us to love them and to help them feel safe and secure.

This book talks about how we can help little Kooris to grow up strong by spending time with them—cuddling, playing, singing, reading, listening, telling stories and talking.

The book includes:

- information about what little Kooris do at different stages
- ideas about things we can do with our little Kooris
- games and activities
- contacts to help with parenting

Baby Kooris are important to the whole community. We need to make sure that our baby Kooris and little Kooris grow up healthy, strong and proud.

Being a parent can be hard at times. Don't be shamed to ask for help. There is a contact list in the back of this book with important phone numbers for people you can call if you need help or support.

This book has been developed as part of the Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family Strategy which is a NSW Government initiative.



Newborn baby 0-3 months

In the first few weeks of life baby will spend a lot of time sleeping and feeding.

All babies like to be held close, cuddled and rocked.


Babies like to look at faces and listen to voices. They are curious about what they see and hear.

Newborn babies like to feel secure. Baby will get to know you very quickly and rely on you for food and love. Being close to mum is very important for a new baby.

Newborn babies do not cry to 'get attention' or 'get at' their parents. They cry because they are hungry, wet, need a cuddle or need to sleep.

You can't spoil baby by giving it too much attention.

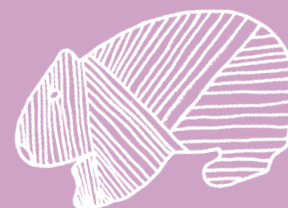
Baby will be upset by loud noises, sudden movement and angry voices.

 *No matter how tired, angry or frustrated you feel—NEVER shake a baby. If you feel upset tell someone else and get some help.*



Between 0 and 3 months
baby will start to:

- smile
- watch faces
- listen to your voice
- lift up their head
when lying on belly
- kick their legs
by 2 months
- laugh by 3 months.



What you can do:

Give baby lots of attention. Cuddle your baby.

Talk, sing and hum to your baby. Play music to baby.

When baby makes a sound, smile and talk back and say their name.

Carry baby in a sling close to your body.


A quiet time before sleep helps baby settle.

To protect baby from harm, sleep baby on their back.

Babies like to be touched gently. Play with baby, gently pat and stroke them and move their arms and legs up, down and around.

Babies need time on their belly to make their arms and neck strong. Place baby on their belly and hold a toy in front of their face. Lift it up slowly so baby needs to raise their head to see the toy.

Tie a rattle to the end of the bassinet to encourage baby to move their legs and kick.

 *Developing a routine will help—try to do some things like bathing, sleeping and feeding baby at the same time every day.*



Your baby 3-9 months


Baby is growing and you are learning about each other every day.

Baby loves to be with you and is learning that you are the person who provides care and love.

Baby will start to move around more. Playing and moving will help baby grow stronger.

Baby loves to smile and feels safe and happy when the people around are happy.

Never leave baby alone on a bed where they could fall off.

 *From 6 months baby will start to eat mashed food. Baby needs healthy food to grow strong. Get advice from a Family Worker or Health Centre.*

Between 3 and 9 months baby will start to:

- smile a lot
- make gurgling noises
- reach out to grab things
- hold and shake a rattle
- make sounds and 'talk'
- roll over from front to back
- push up and then sit up
- play with toes
- be interested in animals
- talk in 'baby language' and say short words like "mama", "dada", "no"
- pull up to a standing position.



What you can do:

Talk to baby all the time and tell them about what you are doing.

Repeat simple sounds like “maa” and “daa”.

Make faces and blow raspberries on baby’s belly.


Sing and play music.

Give baby lots of cuddles and hold baby close.

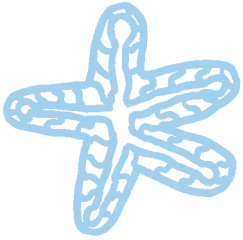
Give baby time on the floor without a nappy so baby can kick and move about.

Put baby on the tummy to make the back strong and help baby to start crawling.

Babies love to hold things—give baby a rattle, a toy or a plastic or wooden spoon to play with. Make sure it’s smooth and too large to swallow.

 *Babies are happy and settled when life is predictable—try to have a routine for feeding and sleeping. Baby will need regular sleeps throughout the day.*

Games for you and baby 3-6 months



Peek-a-boo

Cover your face with your hands or a scarf and then show your face and say “peek-a-boo”. Babies are happy to do this over and over again.

Mirror game

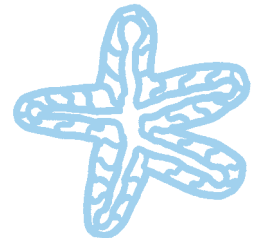
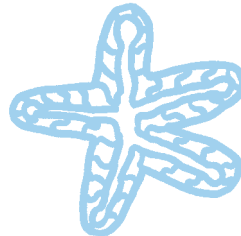
Let baby look in the mirror. Talk about what you can see—baby, nose, eyes, ears.

Lost & found

Let baby play with a cup or toy and then cover it with a cloth. Baby will look for the missing object. You may need to help baby find it.



All little Kooris are different and develop at their own pace. The thing your little Koori needs most is your love, care and cuddles.



Games for you and baby 6-9 months

Hide and seek

You can hide under a table or behind a door and call out to baby—can they find you?

Imitation games

Babies love to imitate you—laugh, cough, clap your hands and move your arms and watch baby try to do the same.

Round and round the garden

Trace a path on the baby's palm as you sing:

Round and round the garden, like a teddy bear,

One step, ...two steps ...

(walk your fingers up baby's arm)

Tickle under there.

(and tickle baby's armpit)



Older babies 9-18 months

Baby will be curious about everything—sounds, music, books, household objects.

Baby will start to explore—first by crawling and then by walking.

Once baby starts crawling everything on the floor will end up in the mouth. Make sure there are no small objects around that baby can swallow. Keep things clean.

Being safe is a big issue when babies start to move around. You need to make sure all poisons (such as medicines and cleaning fluids), sharp objects and dangerous items are locked away up high. Put anything that baby may break out of reach.

Baby may have sudden mood changes and will test their will against others by wanting to get their own way. Baby will also start to learn simple rules.

Between 9 and 18 months baby will start to:

- crawl
- stand up
- climb
- find out about objects by pushing, pulling and banging
- take their first steps
- look up when you call their name
- imitate sounds
- say a few words
- shake their head and say "no"
- smile and laugh to attract your attention
- play with everything they can get their hands on.



Baby will practice these new skills over and over.



What you can do:

Baby always needs lots of cuddles and attention.

Play, talk, laugh and sing with baby.

Give baby pots and spoons to bang.

Cuddle and roll on the floor together.

Take baby outside, point to trees and animals and say their names.

Hold baby on your lap and show them books, pictures, photo albums. Point at the pictures and talk about what's happening in them.

Read simple picture books to baby.

Give baby non-toxic pens and crayons and lots of paper to scribble on.

Fill plastic containers that have lids with stones or rice and help baby to shake them and make noises.



Babies don't need toys that cost a lot—they will learn and have lots of fun playing with cardboard boxes, saucepans, pegs... and you!



Games for you and baby 9-18 months

Through the tunnel

Cut the ends off 2 cardboard boxes, line them up and tape them together. You can also use 2 chairs with a blanket. Ask baby to crawl through the tunnel to you.

Fill it up

Put objects like pegs, balls or blocks into a box or saucepan. Show baby how to take the objects out and put them in again.

Peg play

Pegs make great toys. Peg them to the top of a saucepan or box and show baby how to take them off.

Chasing

Give baby a head start and then crawl after baby. When you catch up, give them a cuddle. You can also help baby to chase balls or rolling toys.



Singing

You might have a favourite song you like to sing to baby.



Little Kooris


1¹/₂-2¹/₂ years



Baby is growing into a little Koori now. Little Kooris like to explore and will sometimes fall. They are watching and learning all the time.

They can understand many more words than they can say.

Little Kooris like to make a noise. They are learning to talk. You can help by talking, playing and singing with them.



Little Kooris do not understand 'sharing' or 'waiting'. Now is the time to start helping them to understand how to take turns and how to share.

Little Kooris will enjoy being with older kids, cousins and grandparents who have time to spend playing. Little Kooris still need someone to play with and someone to keep an eye on them.

Start encouraging your little Koori to use a potty or big toilet.



Between 18 months and 2½ years little Kooris will start to:

- kick and throw a ball
- use simple words like “mum”, “milk”, “sore”
- name foods and body parts
- understand questions
- help with simple tasks
- use pencils and crayons
- play alone
- repeat games and words
- feed themselves
- turn knobs and push buttons.



What you can do:

Little Kooris love music—sing, play music and dance with them.


Take little Kooris exploring—a garden or a park can be an exciting place.

Sit little Kooris on your lap to look at books. Help little Kooris to point at the pictures and name things: “look—a big brown dog”. Let little Kooris turn the pages.

At this age, little Kooris love to pretend and imagine—a box of old clothes and shoes, towels and hats can be hours of fun. A sheet over a couple of chairs can be a place to hide.

Talk to them and repeat the words they have said. Tell them the name of objects and then ask “what’s that?”.

Little Kooris love to help—involve them in daily routines like hanging out the washing or washing the floor.

 *All little Kooris need cuddles and hugs so they know you care about them and that they are loved.*



Games for little Kooris 1¹/₂-2¹/₂ years

Cardboard boxes

Cardboard boxes are great toys. They can be taped together, painted and decorated to become cars, towers and tunnels. Cut windows and a door into a large box and you have a house.

Chase me

Little Kooris will start to run and they will love to be chased and caught. They also like to hop 'like a kangaroo' or run 'like the wind'.

Sand or water play

Little Kooris love to play in sand and water. Give them some plastic containers like mugs, buckets, spades and a funnel with a tray of water or sand. Never leave a little Koori alone with water.



Games for little Kooris 1¹/₂-2¹/₂ years

Word games

Touch and talk—say “this is your nose” and touch little Koori’s nose, “this is your ear” and touch their ear.

While dressing—“where do your shoes go?”

As you cook—“what will I use to mix the cake?”

Toy libraries

Most libraries have toy libraries where you can borrow toys. Little Kooris love puzzles and any toys that link together like trains with carriages. Toys that can be pushed or pulled are also very good. Talk to your Playgroup Coordinator or Family Worker about where you can borrow toys.

Playgroup

Playgroups are a great place for little Kooris to go to meet with other kids, learning through play and activities. They are also a great place for mums, dads, aunties, uncles and grandparents to talk to other parents or early childhood specialists for advice and support.

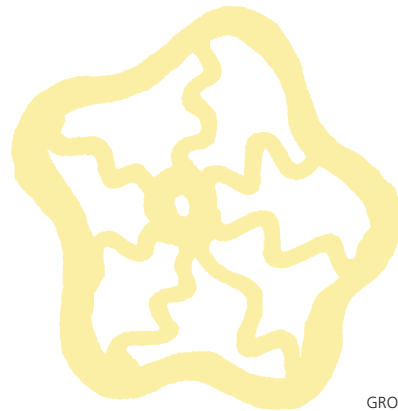
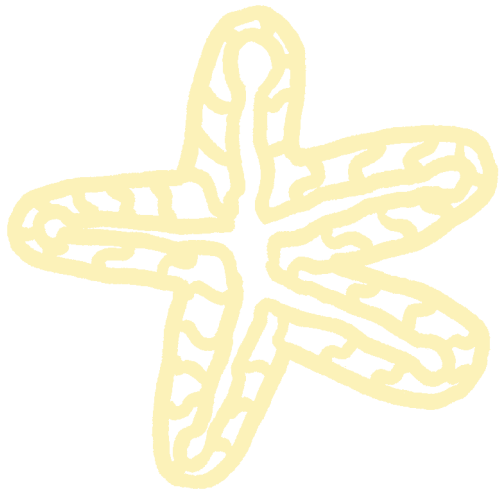


Growing up fast 2¹/₂-3¹/₂ years

Your little Koori is growing up fast, learning new things everyday. They can say more words, ask more questions, follow simple directions and do more things by themselves.

Little Kooris learn through play. They don't need expensive toys but they need you to spend time with them—get down on their level and join in the fun.

Your little Koori is also learning to be independent and this can mean tantrums, not wanting to share and fighting with other children. They can be bossy and start giving orders like “go away”.





Between 2½ and 3½ your child will:

- use words together. For example: “go potty now”
- run around and fall over a lot
- walk up stairs
- jump with two feet
- help dress themselves
- ask lots of questions
- know their full name
- start to understand ‘sharing’
- copy words and actions
- make music, sing and dance
- like stories and books.



What you can do:

Spend time with your little Koori—play and talk with them.

Yarnin' (telling stories)


Share your stories and listen to your little Koori's stories. They are learning about you and the world around them.

Learning skills

Little Kooris are learning every day—show them how to put on clothes the right way, do up and undo buttons and zips. Try lacing up shoes and tying bows. Let them have a try at doing some of the things you do and encourage them when they have a go. Let them help with getting a feed.

Going walkabout (exploring)

As little Kooris get older you can take them on longer walks. Show them the local area and tell them stories about people and places or just describe what you can see.



***** *It's important that we keep our little Kooris safe. Make sure you know where they are and that there is always someone looking after them.*

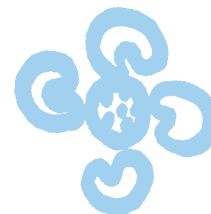
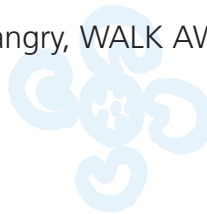
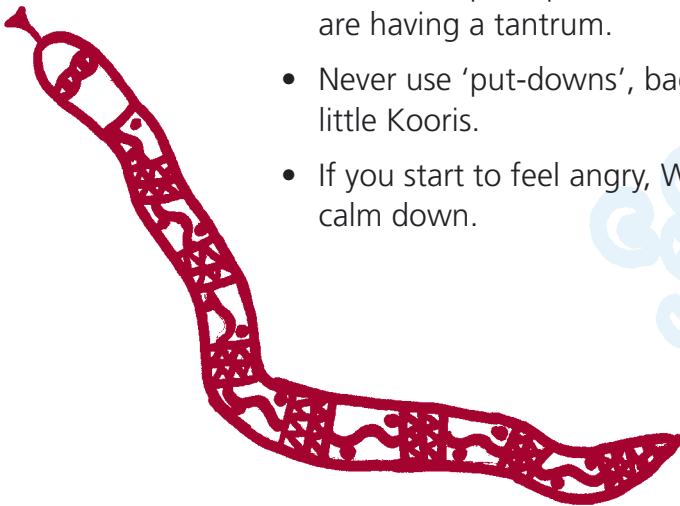
Learning about feelings

If your little Koori is upset, angry or fighting with another child the best thing you can do is distract them. Take them away and do something else like reading a book or playing a chasing game. Help them understand their feelings. For example: say “you are really angry but you must not hit your brother”.

Goin’ wild (tantrums)

Little tantrums are best ignored. Make sure you notice and talk to your little Koori when they stop their tantrum. Sometimes feelings get more and more out of control until you end up with a big tantrum. Try to step in before the tantrum gets out of control. Distract your little Koori, help them relax and talk about why they are upset.

- It never helps to punish or hit a child when they are having a tantrum.
- Never use ‘put-downs’, bad names or swear at little Kooris.
- If you start to feel angry, WALK AWAY until you calm down.



Games for little Kooris 2^{1/2}-3^{1/2} years

Making music

Little Kooris can have lots of fun with home made instruments. Make clapping sticks from pieces of wood. Fill a tin or plastic container with rice or stones to shake. Nail bottle tops to a stick that you can rattle. Put paper over the top of a tin to make a drum. Don't be shame. Get up and dance with your little Kooris.

Painting

Paint with fingers, brushes, sponges, toothbrushes onto just about anything—paper, cloth, newspaper, wood, paper bags and plates, bark, rope. Do it outside because it will be messy. Children also love to paint with water—give them a brush and let them paint the outside doors, windows and walls.

Making a feed (cooking)

3-year-olds usually love cooking. Start with simple things like a Vegemite sandwich, pouring drinks, damper, biscuits and popcorn. Be very careful with things that are hot or sharp.

Collage

Cardboard, coloured paper, straws, string, leaves, wool, egg shells, sand and small sea shells can all be used to make a collage. Stick on the materials using glue and see what interesting pictures you can make. Flour and water mixed together makes a good glue.



Your little Koori 3¹/₂-5 years

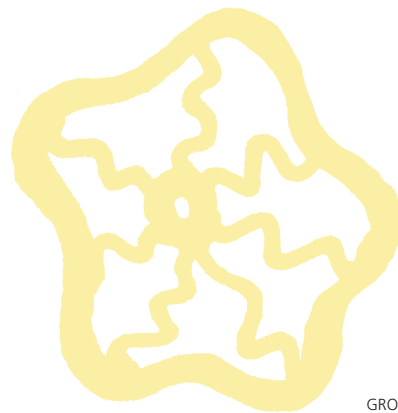
Little Kooris are learning so much—talking, playing, getting along with others, sharing and taking turns.

Little Kooris are more independent but they still need an adult around to care for them and keep them safe.

Little Kooris can understand problems, follow simple rules and will enjoy helping you. They will show affection and understand when someone has been hurt.

Preschool

This is a good age for your little Koori to attend preschool as it helps them get ready for school.



Between 3½ and 5
your child will:

- have a longer attention span
- ask a lot of questions
- use words together to make sentences
- run smoothly and easily
- dress without help
- use paste, scissors, pencils and crayons
- climb ladders and trees
- tell stories
- sing and dance
- enjoy playing with other children
- enjoy jokes and rhymes.



*If little Kooris are not
talking much, they
may need their ears
'checked' by a nurse or
doctor.*



What you can do:

Proud Kooris

Little Kooris need to know they are loved. Even when they are naughty tell them: “I don’t like it when you do something wrong BUT I always love you.”

Let’s teach little Kooris to be proud of who they are and let them know they belong to one of the oldest surviving cultures in the world.


That’s deadly!

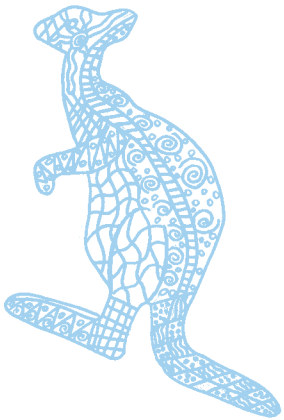
Little Kooris need to be told when they are doing the right thing. Let them know when they do something good. Tell them how deadly they are.

Read books together, tell stories and sing songs.

At this age, little Kooris love to tell stories and you can help them to make their own books. Let them draw the pictures and paste or staple the pages together.

Housework can be fun and children can learn skills by helping you—get them to help you with cooking, bringing in the washing or sweeping the floor.

 *Encourage little Kooris to help you and make it fun.*



Games for little Kooris 3¹/₂-5 years

Masks

Paper bags or paper plates make great masks. Little Kooris can cut out the shapes for eyes, nose and mouth and decorate the mask with crayons or paint. Make masks for different characters or animals.

Gamin'

Little Kooris love to pretend—they can be wild animals, superheroes and fairies. These pretend games and stories help them learn and grow and are an important part of being a healthy little Koori.

Growing things

If you have space for a vegetable garden you can grow simple foods like carrots, potatoes, beans and tomatoes. It's fun to plant and grow and makes eating healthy food fun too. You can also try growing flowers and sprouting seeds for salad.



Games for little Kooris 3¹/₂-5 years

Sorting

Little Kooris at this age love to sort things into different groups. Try using coloured pegs, stones, shells, pasta, big buttons or food. Sort the pegs by colour, shells by size, buttons by shape or whatever way you decide. Pasta, shells and buttons can also be threaded onto string to make necklaces.

Going bush (bushwalking)

By this age you can take little Kooris on walks in the park or bush. Tell them stories about animals or birds or tales from the 'dreaming'.



Good food for babies and little Kooris

Babies and little Kooris need good food to grow healthy and strong. Breast milk or formula is the most important food for baby until they are 12 months.

When should I start feeding my baby solids?

Around 6 months is the best time to start baby on solid food. Introducing solids too early can increase the risk of food allergies and choking.

What solids should I feed my baby?

Baby needs well mashed food. Start by mixing baby rice cereal or mashed potato with breast milk or formula to make a smooth paste.

Then try mashed vegies—potato, pumpkin, carrots, peas and sweet potato.

Get baby used to vegies and then try mashed fruit—ripe bananas, well cooked apples and pears.

Do not give adult or kids' breakfast cereals to baby—these are harder to digest.



How much should I feed my baby?

Start with a teaspoon and increase the amount slowly to a few tablespoons. The cereal or potato can be thickened as baby eats more.

Baby is learning how to eat so don't worry if baby doesn't eat much at first.

Give baby a breast milk or formula feed before solids.

Avoid pieces of raw vegetables or hard fruit as these can make baby choke.

Feeding baby 6-9 months

Start with rice cereal, mashed vegies and fruit.

Then try small servings of:

- rice and pasta
- tender well cooked meat
- fish without bones
- well cooked egg.

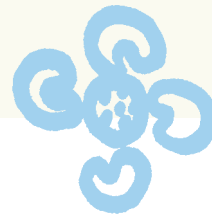
Baby can start to drink from a cup with a lid.

Try boiled water that has been cooled, formula or breast milk.

As baby gets used to eating solids, you can start to give solids first and then milk.

Make sure baby's food is not too hot.

Test it on your own lips first.



Feeding baby 9-12 months

Baby can now eat mashed food from the family meal—meat, pasta, fish, beans, rice, noodles, vegies and fruit are all good foods for baby and little Kooris.

Finger food will help baby learn how to feed themselves.

Try:

- boiled pieces of carrot, potato and pumpkin
- ripe banana or pear
- cheese
- stewed or grated apple.

Don't add salt or sugar to baby's food.

Baby will still need 3-4 breastfeeds or bottles per day.

Try to cook one meal for baby every day.

Take-away is not a healthy food for baby.

12 months to 5 years

Little Kooris need a good mix of healthy fresh food.

Feed your little Koori fresh fruit and vegies, meat, fish, eggs, beans, wholegrain bread, pasta and rice.

Meals made at home are cheaper and healthier.

Avoid all take-away meals and junk food like sweets, chips and soft drinks or limit to one treat a week if necessary.

Drinks

The best drinks for baby are breast milk, formula or water.

Cows milk is too strong for baby to drink before they are 12 months old.

Do not give fizzy drinks or soft drinks to baby.

Cordial and soft drinks are full of sugar and can cause weight gain and tooth decay.

Cola and other soft drinks also contain caffeine, which can make little Kooris hyper.

Encourage little Kooris to drink water or mix fruit juice with water.

Storing food

You can save time by cooking up a large amount of food for baby and storing it.

Mashed baby food can be frozen in clean ice cube trays. Spoon it into the tray, put the tray in a clean plastic bag and freeze. Do not keep for more than 30 days.

You can reheat one or two ice cubes as you need them.

Once food has been warmed and given to baby, throw out any left in the bowl.

Contacts and

ABORIGINAL FAMILY WORKERS

Campbelltown Family Support	02 4628 7233
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FAMILY CARE CENTRE

Karitane	02 9794 2300
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COMMUNITY HEALTH & EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES

Campbelltown	02 4629 2111
Bankstown	02 9780 2777
Bowral	02 4861 8000
Bradbury	02 4629 2199
Fairfield	02 9794 1700
Hoxton Park	02 9827 2222
Miller	02 9608 8920
Moss Vale	02 4861 8000
Narellan	02 4640 3500
New Berrima	02 4861 8000
Rosemeadow	02 4633 4100
Tahmoor	02 4683 6000

supports

ABORIGINAL SERVICES

Bangala Aboriginal Health Unit	02 9828 6941
Cabrogal Cottage	02 9610 0275
Cartwright Public School Dental Service	02 9607 7979
Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council	02 9602 5280
KARI Aboriginal Resources Inc	02 9822 4922
Koori Women's Health Clinic	02 9828 4844
Nanghami Ngallia Aboriginal Corporation	02 9796 2931
Tharawal Aboriginal Corporation Aboriginal Medical Service	02 4628 4837
Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council	02 4681 0059
Walomi Aboriginal Community Transport	02 4629 6828
Warrumbucca Aboriginal Home Care	02 4633 2111
Yamanda Aboriginal Association	02 4872 2576

ABORIGINAL PLAYGROUPS, PRESCHOOLS & CHILD CARE

Airds Playgroup (Tharawal/Northcott)	02 4628 4837
Bankstown Guring Gang Playgroup	02 9796 2931
Bonnyrigg Lil Possums Playgroup	02 9754 2655
Campbelltown Ooranga Wanderah Preschool	02 4620 0298
Liverpool Coota Gulla Preschool	02 9602 8062
Miller Yongurra Playgroup	02 9607 8293
Minto Playgroup (Mura Nanga Mai/ Campbelltown Family Support)	02 4647 5604
Moss Vale & Hilltop Playgroups (Yamanda)	02 4872 2576

HELP, ADVICE AND SUPPORT – CALL CENTRES

Emergency 24 hours (Ambulance, Fire, Police)	000
Centrelink – family and parenting payments	13 61 50
DOCS Helpline (24 hours)	13 21 11
Domestic Violence Line (24 hours)	1800 656 463
Early Childhood Intervention Info Line	1300 656 865
Karitane Care Line (24 hours)	1800 677 961
Parent Line	13 20 55
Tresillian Helpline (24 hours)	1800 637 357
Women's Information and Referral	1800 817 227
Poisons Information Service (24 hour service)	13 11 26

