



Resilience in Reach
AN INITIATIVE OF



TIPS FOR FAMILIES*, FROM FAMILIES & YOUNG PEOPLE

About Navigating School Challenges and the Education System

* Families includes parents, carers, families and kin



Breaking Barriers



Making Connections



Building Confidence



INTRODUCTION

The following tips and suggestions are about navigating school and the education system as a parent, carer, family member or kin supporting a child or young person experiencing complex mental health challenges.

All these ideas came from parents, carers, families or kin who have been involved in the Resilience in Reach Project in some way.

Some will resonate with you, and others may not. We hope some of them may be useful for you.

We welcome any further learnings you may have from your own experience that you would like to share. (See the end of this resource to find out how you can contribute to this list.)

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR FAMILIES



Alternate education options for young people

- *There's not a one-size-fits-all when it comes to education. There are many options and pathways you can choose for your child, if that means making them a happy, healthier human being.*
- *There are so many more education options for young people. I wish I'd known about different education options. (See the resources section on this website for information about alternate education options.)*
- *I unschooled my child, just to let her rest, much to my family's shock and horror. I did a lot of research. And I reached out to the Department of Education and started the process of Homeschooling enrolment, to basically create our own school at home.*

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR FAMILIES



Looking for the right school

- *When looking for the right school, look at the school culture by;*
 - *Going to a P&C meeting.*
 - *Look at the way the teaching staff engage or relate to their parent/carer cohort.*
 - *Seeing what values the school has, and see them in action.*
 - *Read their mission statement.*

At school

- *School approaches may lead to 'punishment and reward' responses to get your child to go to school. But these can easily backfire, leading to shame for your child when they can't achieve the milestone that's been set (e.g., not having a meltdown, achieving a pre-determined number of attendance days). As a parent, it's important to recognise that schools don't always have the right approach either. Do your own research and then you can better advocate for your child.*
- *If having issues at your current school, draw on the school values and use them to challenge/highlight issues.*

TIPS & SUGGESTIONS FOR FAMILIES

When your child can't go to school

- *I realised there's an enormous amount of kids that can't go to school, and it might be temporary, it might be permanent, it might be for a whole range of reasons. I reached out to the Department of Education. I think a lot of people are afraid to do that, but I needed to know what the rules are, because the internet's so confusing.*
- *The message about school is 'every day counts', so that kids go to school, and I don't think that is a good message. I think those mental health days or emergency days that I would keep my child away from school were the days that really counted for her health and wellbeing.*
- *Many friends and family and teachers won't understand or agree with your decision to not force your child to go to school. But there is support through the resources and information that are out there – podcasts, books, Facebook groups.*
- *Having a child who can't attend school can have huge financial implications for parents whose work is impacted, and is extra difficult if you are a sole parent. Maybe time at school can be reduced or employers can be educated. Maybe one of the many alternate schools in Queensland will be more suitable for your child.*

* Recommendation: School Can't Australia (in the resources list) provides some great information and supports for families navigating school challenges with their child/young person



WANT TO CONTRIBUTE?



Are you a parent, carer, family member or kin of a young person who has experienced mental health challenges with valuable information or advice for other parents, carers, families, or kin?

Is there anything you have learned from your experience that you would like to offer people going through something similar?

Would you like your ideas added to the Resilience in Reach resources for parents, carers, families and kin?

You can let us know your suggestions by sending them to us via email: info@raisingminds.org.au or via website [here](#)