

GIVING OUR CHILDREN THE BEST START IN LIFE

Position:

- FAMILY FIRST's top priority is the welfare of children. FAMILY FIRST believes the first question we should always ask when making decisions is: "What's best for children?" FAMILY FIRST values the contribution of children and young Australians and wants them to participate fully in family and community life;
- FAMILY FIRST believes society is stronger when children and young Australians have positive and supportive relationships with their parents, siblings, extended family and friends;
- FAMILY FIRST believes teenagers in particular flourish in family and community cultures where parents have enough time to share activities and conversations with them and where loving guidance is given. Studies have shown that small things like sharing family meals are very effective in reducing the risks of young people having developmental or behavioral problems;
- FAMILY FIRST believes we need to love, support and encourage our children and young Australians so they can develop their self-esteem and feel confident about who they are and their intrinsic worth;
- FAMILY FIRST is concerned about the rising incidence of bullying, particularly in schools, which can be severely traumatizing for victims. FAMILY FIRST is also concerned about rising levels of violence and binge drinking among young people;
- FAMILY FIRST is very concerned that children are being forced to grow up too quickly. FAMILY FIRST believes children must be allowed to relish their childhood and it is something that society must protect;
- FAMILY FIRST is concerned that our consumerist and materialistic culture has extended to the commercial promotion of sexy clothes to children, particularly girls. This leads to the premature sexualisation of children, who cannot understand the full implications;

- FAMILY FIRST does not believe there is an emphasis on good quality, innocent children's television programs that children can enjoy.

Actions:

- FAMILY FIRST wants more funding for programs in schools and communities that focus on improving young people's self-esteem and confidence and equipping them with life skills such as relationship education and financial management;
- FAMILY FIRST wants more support for programs to reduce the high rate of youth suicide, particularly in regional and rural areas;
- FAMILY FIRST wants more rehabilitation and treatment to tackle substance abuse;
- FAMILY FIRST has a 10-point plan to change Australia's culture of binge drinking, which is killing Australians, particularly young Australians. We need to urgently tackle the nation's alcohol toll and create a culture of responsible drinking;
- FAMILY FIRST wants tough action to ban Internet Pornography which pollutes our children's minds and has been campaigning for a ban at the Internet Service Provider (ISP) level;
- FAMILY FIRST has been lobbying for tighter controls on mobile phones which are danger zones for young people as they also use them as digital cameras, video recorders, music players and Internet browsers. FAMILY FIRST wants no access to mobile chat services for children under 18 and service providers to be required to make owners, particularly parents, aware of any risks to children and how to reduce them.