



# Family Coping

## The Family Coping with Child Heart Disease Project

The HeartKids Family Coping Program is based on research by world-renowned researcher Professor Alun Jackson of Australian Centre for Heart Health (ACHH), through a project funded by HeartKids in 2016.

Over 18 months, Professor Jackson in conjunction with HeartKids Support Team at the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) studied 20 HeartKids families to find out exactly what caring for a heart child involved. This included the emotional, financial, developmental and psychological impacts of congenital heart disease on the entire family, including the parents and siblings.

The findings were remarkable, leading to the development of the Family Coping Program which HeartKids piloted last year, delivering it to 50 families in Victoria. Thanks to the generosity of the Australian Community this year, we can now move into the next phase of the program; training and delivering to families across the country.

### What does the Family Coping Program cover?

Areas covered in the program include:

- the positive psychology of parenting
- adjusting to a family life with chronic illness
- strengthening family's coping strategies
- helping your child to express feelings in early years
- tuning into siblings
- using assertiveness to advocate for yourself and your child
- empowering your child to cope
- couples working together towards improving relationships
- adjusting, accepting and healing through mindfulness
- helping your child through transitions

What happens now?

The next phase is to train the HeartKids Community Support Team members, as they will work alongside the Psychologist to deliver the program as we begin roll-out in 2019. South Australia will begin in early 2019 and we will roll it out on a state by state basis once funding is secured.

Sign up to our newsletter and Facebook page for updates regarding dates in 2019.

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[Try watching this video on www.youtube.com](#), or enable JavaScript if it is disabled in your browser.