

Rock Solid

Resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families of children with special needs



Artwork by Renee Jenkins

What is Rock Solid?

Rock Solid is a first of its kind website for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families with school-aged or younger children with special needs in Victoria.

Rock Solid weaves together information about schools and services from the Association for Children with a Disability's everyday work supporting families, the voices of Elders and Aboriginal families, and the voice of Aboriginal researcher and community advocate Jody Barney.

Rock Solid is first of all for families but schools and services can also learn from Rock Solid – about what families might want, and what they have a right to expect.

The information in Rock Solid is for everyone – Elders, parents and carers, young people themselves, and for everyone involved in caring for Aboriginal children.

"... It's hard, I know, as an Indigenous person, to do all this. But you have to push yourself. And be assertive. Let them know what you want, and how you want your kid to grow up and learn." – Rodney

"The doctor said to me, 'You're right, he's autistic'. It was a relief in a lot of ways. But in other ways, I'm thinking, 'Oh god, what's the road I've got ahead of me'. But since he's been diagnosed, I haven't looked back." – Stacey

Stepping stones in your child's education journey

The pages of Rock Solid are like stepping stones to support families with their child's education journey, from the early years and through school.

Rock Solid gives families information about:

- **Early in the journey: before your child starts school**
- **Choosing a school for your child**
- **What schools should do to help your child**
- **What you can do to support your child's journey**
- **If there's a problem at school**
- **More information for the journey**

Families can also check out our Learning Together online resource at www.acd.org.au/learning-together-resource

www.acd.org.au/welcome-rock-solid



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Rock Solid and its journey

Rock Solid was developed for the Aboriginal community through deep partnership between the Association for Children with a Disability (ACD) and Aboriginal researcher and community advocate, Jody Barney. Jody is a Urangan/Birri-Gubba Deaf woman living in regional Victoria. Jody has worked in the area of Deafness and Disability for over 25 years. Jody has worked on numerous resources to increase the knowledge and information for families, communities and organisations.

Research and consultation

ACD asked Jody to do community research and consultation as part of developing Learning Together, a resource for all Victorian families who have children with special needs in school. The richness of the knowledge and stories shared by Elders and families in this research comes out of Jody's culturally grounded ways of doing that work.

"Be assertive. Be proud. Your cultural needs and your child's cultural needs are something that's very important in the outcome – in the long run. Don't give up." – Suzanna

A new resource for community

Rock Solid started life as just a few pages of the ACD Learning Together resource. It grew into Rock Solid because of the wealth of knowledge that Elders and families shared, because of the huge community need for information, and because families said that to be useful, a resource must use language, quotes, ideas and images that families use in everyday life.



Jody Barney, Wurundjeri Elder Aunty Diane Kerr and Boonwurrung Elder Aunty Carolyn Briggs

A weaving together

Rock Solid weaves together many different voices and knowledges: information about schools and services from ACD's everyday work helping families, the voices of Elders and families, and Jody's voice as researcher, and community advocate and cultural consultant. These are reflected in the language used, and the quotes, stories and ideas shared.

Thank you

We are grateful to Boonwurrung Elder Aunty Carolyn Briggs and Wurundjeri Elder Aunty Diane Kerr for their support for Rock Solid, including the Welcome.

Our deep gratitude to the Elders and families involved in Rock Solid for so generously sharing their knowledge and stories to help other children, young people and families in community.

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