

Fishing 101 FOR KIDS

Avid fisherman and dad-of-two **ROB MORRIS** shares his tips for getting kids “hooked” on fishing.



02

“What kid doesn’t get excited to cook and eat a fish they caught themselves?”

01

Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day, teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime,” said Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu.

Give a kid a fish and they’ll probably drop it, I say. Teach a kid to fish and you’ll become an expert at untangling lines. But seriously, ever thought about teaching your kids to fish? It’s one of life’s must-have skills. Spending time in nature with children helps shape them into good people, strengthens your bond with them and creates memories they’ll cherish forever. I’ve been fishing with my dad since I could walk, and as a dad myself for almost 10 years, I’ve learned a thing or two about fishing with kids. So, let’s get stuck into exactly what you need to know.



03

The KISS approach – Keep It Simple Silly

WHERE: A wharf, estuary beach or riverbank is the perfect location for newbies. You can usually park nearby, and you've got plenty of room to spread out. You don't even have to cast very far, or, in the case of a wharf, at all – just drop it straight down. Choosing a spot like this means you can also tie it in with a picnic and make it a family affair.

WHAT: Your target should be common species in your region. For most of Australia, it will be bream, flathead and whiting. The aim is to make it enjoyable, and nothing gets kids excited like feeling little nibbles and catching fish, no matter the size.

HOW: Choose tackle shops that sell kid and adult rod-and-reel combos. They often come with a fishing line on, so you're ready to rock 'n' roll. An old-school handline also works but it can be tricky to cast and lots of loose line may invite unwanted tangles.

My family uses 'circle hooks' with a small ball sinker running all the way to the hook. Not only is this the easiest rig to set up, it's also easy to feel bites, and fish practically hook themselves... winning! Tie the hook on with a 'locked half-blood knot' as it's one of the easiest knots and also strong (YouTube is your friend).

BAIT: A packet of frozen prawns is the go-to bait; they work well and are easy to put on a hook. Frozen squid is also great as it stays on the hook incredibly well. Plenty of nibbles before the bait is gone equals a

greater chance of hooking a fish. If you catch a fish of legal size and the kids want to keep it by all means do. What kid doesn't get excited to cook and eat a fish they caught themselves, right? Remember, fishing adventures can take you to some pretty beautiful spots in the great outdoors. Most times catching a fish is just a bonus.

Good luck and tight lines, legends. ●

Rob



04

DON'T

- ✗ Try to teach kids everything at once
- ✗ Go on a boat on a rough day
- ✗ Buy a heap of expensive gear
- ✗ Use lures at first
- ✗ Keep a fish if you don't know what it is

DO

- ✓ Keep it simple (remember KISS)
- ✓ Use frozen bait
- ✓ Ask your local tackle shop for suitable spots
- ✓ Check if you require a fishing licence (under 12s are usually exempt)
- ✓ Take snacks (a hungry kid's a grumpy kid)
- ✓ Abide by minimum legal sizes and bag limits
- ✓ Remember it's all about having fun

01 Beachside fishing. 02 Fishing is a great family affair. 03 Teaching the kids how to prep a fish to cook. 04 Winner winner, fishy dinner. All photos © Rob Morris