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Show kids door at 20

Expert says staying home builds insecurities

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PARENTS need to declare "independence day" on adult children and turf them out of the family nest by age 20.

Australian life skills coach Michele Jones thinks a failure to "set a date for kids to vacate the premises" can lead to problems down the track.

Ms Jones said a growing number of parents sought professional help in order to manage the process of convincing their adult children to leave home. She said children should

be living independently by the age of 20.

"Parents convince themselves the child staying at home longer will help them save for the purchase of their own home, some even going as far as building a granny flat to accommodate their child, keeping them safe and tending to their every need," she said.

"In reality parents are simply sending the message to their child that they are not resourceful or capable to live out in the world on their own and they won't be successful enough to afford a house without their help.

"A recent Household, Income and Labour Dynamics survey of 17,000 Australians found those who left home after the age of 25 earned \$6000 less than those who fled the nest earlier.

"Wealth is also impacted, with figures estimating men

end up \$20,779 worse off and women \$95,676, leading to further welfare benefit blowouts by 2020".

Almost one in four people aged between 20 and 34 continue to live in the parental home. In Sydney and Melbourne this figure is 27 per cent.

Ms Jones said parents cited issues such as general cost of living, university fees, safety concerns and society-based

fears as reasons why their children did not leave home.

Multigenerational Family Living, a new book by University of NSW academics Edgar Liu and Hazel Easthope, said financial issues were the main reason why children did not leave home. This reflected increasing tertiary qualifications, workforce casualisation and the unaffordability of housing.

However, there could be an upside, with some adult children

helping pay off their parents' mortgages, they say.

Anthea Szemeti, 19, is about to move out into a college at the University of Melbourne.

Ms Szemeti is not convinced Ms Jones's ultimatum is necessary.

"Twenty is before most people have finished uni so it could put a lot of extra pressure on them," she said.

"It seems unnecessary to say they should move out by then regardless."

Her mother Eleni Szemeti said 25 was a "more reasonable" age to leave home.