



## About MyTime groups

Each MyTime group is unique, but they all share the same purpose: to provide parents and carers of children with additional needs a safe, supportive space to connect and share.

### Who groups are for

MyTime peer support groups are open to parents and carers of children under 18 who need a higher level of care than other children their age. This may be due to disability, developmental delay, a chronic health condition, or other additional needs.

- A diagnosis is not required.
- Groups are not diagnosis-specific; members connect through shared experiences rather than a particular condition.
- At times, others closely involved in a child's life (like grandparents or babysitters) may attend as guests, provided it works for the group. Members always have priority if space is limited. Talk to your coordinator about the expected group size for your region.

### Attendance and safety

The safety and wellbeing of facilitators, members, and children always comes first. In some situations, this may mean a parent or child cannot participate in a MyTime group. If you have concerns, let your coordinator know and follow your organisation's policies and procedures.

- Parents must have at least one child under 18 with additional needs.
- Parents or children who repeatedly behave in unsafe or unkind ways may not be able to attend.

### Children at MyTime

MyTime is parent-focused, but preschool-aged children are welcome, provided a play leader is present.

School-aged children generally cannot attend. There are several reasons for this:

- **Protecting children's wellbeing:** Conversations in MyTime groups are often sensitive. As children get older and their understanding increases, overhearing these discussions may cause harm.
- **Maintaining peer support:** MyTime works best when parents can talk openly. When older children are present, some topics may become 'off limits', reducing opportunities for



connection and support.

- **Different needs at different ages:** Preschool and school-aged children have very different developmental needs. It isn't safe or realistic to expect play leaders to meet both at the same time.

Your coordinator can guide you if a parent requests to bring an older child.

**Tip:** See the [Guiding Principles Handbook](#) for suggestions on how to talk with parents about children attending groups.

### When groups run

Groups are open-ended — there is no set finish date. Parents can join at any time. The schedule (including day, time, and frequency) should be decided in collaboration with your coordinator and group members, and then kept as consistent as possible. Predictability helps families feel confident about attending.

### How groups are delivered

Groups can meet in different formats:

- **Face-to-face:** in local venues such as community centres, schools or neighbourhood houses.
- **Virtual MyTime:** delivered online via video call, reducing barriers for families who can't attend in person.
- **Hybrid:** a mix of face-to-face and online. If using this model, it works best when the whole group meets in the same format (all online, or all in person) to maintain connection. This maximizes opportunities for genuine connection between peers.

If you are incorporating online sessions in your programming, be guided by your group as to how often they occur.