



## Setting up MyTime groups

Facilitators play a big role in making groups welcoming and practical. From choosing a venue to setting up the room, small decisions can make a big difference to how parents experience MyTime.

### Choosing a venue

Depending on the area, the available options for a suitable MyTime venue will vary. A good venue feels safe, comfortable, and accessible. Community halls, schools, childcare centres, libraries, and health centres are often good options – especially as venues that host other programs for parents allow for cross-promotion between services.

Look for spaces that:

- are easy to access (no physical barriers, accessible bathrooms, nearby and accessible parking or public transport)
- offer privacy and quiet so members feel comfortable sharing
- have enough space for parents, carers, and children to move freely
- include features that make sessions easier, like a kitchen, baby change facilities, outdoor play space or toys for young children.

Venues that serve alcohol, or cafes and restaurants, are not suitable for ongoing groups.

Work with your coordinator to assess whether a venue is right, and to complete any risk assessments your organisation requires.

**TIP:** Refer to the 'Inclusive Principle Guide' in the [Guiding Principles Handbook](#) for ideas about creating a warm, welcoming and accessible environment.

### Accommodating children

Although children may be present, MyTime groups are not playgroups. The group should be parent-focused, with parents participating primarily in conversations and activities alongside their peers. If preschool-aged children attend, make sure:

- a play leader is present
- there is a safe space for play leaders to facilitate play and activities
- children can access their parents easily, while parents still have privacy for conversations



- parents can still supervise their children (either in the same room or separated by a glass door)
- members are able to participate in group discussions without children overhearing or regularly interrupting the group.

**Remember:** Even with a play leader present, parents are responsible for their children at all times. It is your responsibility to ensure that all parents feel comfortable with the venue layout and the location of their children during MyTime groups.

Work with your coordinator and play leader to decide on venue suitability. Ensure you undertake a venue risk assessment that meets your organisation's requirements.

### Setting up the room

The physical room set-up is important for creating a functional yet inviting space. At a minimum, make sure the room has:

- comfortable seating arranged for conversation
- tea and coffee facilities (including a kettle or urn, and mugs)
- toys or activities for preschool-aged children (in groups where a play leader is present)
- name tags and pens
- tissues and hand sanitiser.

Other equipment can be sourced as needed.

Arrive early to prepare the space, and check any equipment (such as heating, cooling or AV for guest speakers) so you are ready to welcome and settle members when they arrive.

Some more considerations when setting up:

- boil the urn or kettle for tea and coffee on arrival
- adjust the room temperature
- check any audiovisual equipment for guest speakers
- perform a safety check of the area in line with your organisation's venue risk assessment.