



Running MyTime Groups

As a facilitator, you bring structure and flow to each session. MyTime groups are flexible, but sessions should balance these three key elements:

- Check-in and connect
- Topic-focused discussions
- Activity time.

Together, these elements give members space to share, learn, and look after themselves.

Planning sessions

Plan sessions with your members' needs in mind, while also meeting the program's requirements. Bear in mind, it's not possible to cater to everyone's needs at every session – some members will be less interested in a particular session or activity than others. Instead, try to balance the three key elements across a term. Not every session will look the same, and that's OK.

Examples of session formats:

- Coffee and conversation (check-in and connect) with optional craft (activity).
- Guest speaker followed by reflection and discussion (topic + check-in).
- Facilitator-led discussion on a parent-identified topic, followed by a short guided meditation (topic + activity).

Established groups often plan their term together. In newer groups, you may take more of a lead until members feel comfortable suggesting topics and activities.

Tip: The 'Member-led Guiding Principle' in the Guiding Principles Handbook has information on planning sessions for your members, and how you involve them in decision-making.

Use the term plan template to:

- involve members in shaping sessions
- promote your group to potential members
- share upcoming activities with current members



- keep your coordinator informed.

Check-in and connect

This is the heart of MyTime. It gives members a chance to talk about what matters to them that day — challenges, wins, or anything in between – and offers members the opportunity to get to know one another and build meaningful connections around shared experiences.

Good check-ins can lead to:

- validation (“I’m not the only one who feels this way”)
- belonging (feeling valued and understood)
- stronger networks and connections
- hope and optimism for the future
- confidence to give and receive support.

Check-in and connect time requires you to use all your skills as a facilitator. Your role is to gently guide the conversation, making sure everyone has space to share and that the group remains safe and respectful.

Tip: Refer to the Guiding Principles Handbook for ideas to build into your current practice.

Topic-focused time

Topic-focused sessions build knowledge and skills that support parenting and wellbeing by providing members with the opportunity to share and learn. Topics can be chosen by the group or based on common interests you’ve observed.

Topic-focused time may involve:

- a guest speaker from a trusted organisation – you’ll need to plan ahead for this session
- a discussion you facilitate – get group consensus at the beginning of the session
- a member sharing knowledge or experience.

Example topics include:

- understanding children’s behaviour



- navigating services like the NDIS
- self-care and stress management
- healthy living and wellbeing
- disability-specific information
- local services and resources.

Aim for quality, evidence-based information. Guest speakers should be from reputable organisations, and all other topic-based discussions are supported by evidence-based resources.

Tip: The Guiding Principles Handbook includes tips for facilitating safe, balanced discussions.

Activity time

Activities are about giving members permission and opportunities to relax, try something new, or practise self-care. These sessions can also support connection and confidence.

When planning activities, think about what parents might gain. Activities can stand alone or complement other session elements (for example, an activity focused on building skills and confidence) or serve as a regulation strategy during challenging conversations (for example, colouring, sensory play, or relaxation activities).

Example activities include:

- crafts, puzzles or games
- guided meditation, yoga or mindfulness
- cooking demonstrations
- sharing a hobby or skill.

Activities can be simple and low-cost. Occasionally, these sessions are a special event (for example, an end-of-year celebration). Remember to seek members' ideas and input so the sessions respond to what members find enjoyable and useful.

Working with play leaders

If preschool-aged children attend your group regularly, you'll need to have a play leader. The play leader's role is to engage children in safe, age-appropriate activities, allowing parents to



focus on the group.

You can support play leaders by:

- ensuring the venue is safe and suitable for children
- sharing information about children's interests or needs (with parent permission)
- planning activities together
- touching base before and after sessions to debrief and troubleshoot any problems.

Always be clear with parents that while play leaders run activities, parents remain responsible for their children.

Group agreements

Every group should have a group agreement (sometimes called 'group norms' or 'expectations'). This sets out how members want to work together — for example, being respectful, listening without judgment, and keeping confidentiality. These expectations are defined and agreed on as a group.

Revisit your agreement regularly (each term, when new members join or, at a minimum, annually) and share it with new members. Group agreements provide a neutral, shared foundation and can help prevent or manage conflict.

Tip: A template agreement and tips can be found in the Guiding Principles Handbook – see the 'Safe space' principle.