



## About MyTime

MyTime is a national program of facilitated peer-support groups for parents and carers of children with additional needs. MyTime groups provide a safe, welcoming space for parents to share experiences, learn from one another, and build support networks.

MyTime aims to strengthen parental confidence and wellbeing by fostering a sense of hope and belonging, increasing self-compassion, and building strong connections – ultimately helping families thrive.

### Why MyTime?

Parenting a child with additional needs can bring unique joys and challenges. Evidence suggests peer support programs benefit these parents by increasing hope and optimism, knowledge and social support. Over time, these benefits can improve parents' confidence and wellbeing. MyTime was created to respond to this need – recognising that when parents are supported, children can experience improved wellbeing and development.

MyTime began in 2007, when the Australian Government's Department of Social Services committed to strengthening supports for people with disability and their families. At the time, the [Parenting Research Centre](#) identified a gap in services for parents of children with additional needs – a parent population that often faces higher levels of stress than other parents, affecting their wellbeing and quality of life. With federal funding, the first MyTime peer-support groups were launched to fill this gap, creating spaces where parents could connect, share experiences, and feel supported.

This manual provides guidance for facilitators delivering the MyTime program, ensuring it meets the needs of members and enables them to benefit from attending a peer support group.

### What MyTime aims to achieve

MyTime groups are designed to:

- create a safe space for parents to share, learn and connect
- grow parents' sense of hope and belonging
- increase parents' self-compassion and self-care
- empower parents with information and skills
- build parents' support networks
- increase parents' wellbeing



- increase parenting confidence and success
- help children and young people thrive.

These outcomes are captured in the [MyTime Outcomes Chain](#), which maps how the program creates change for families, and includes a description of each outcome and what it looks like for members.

### How MyTime works

Every MyTime session includes opportunities for members to:

- check in and connect with each other
- focus on a topic that builds knowledge or skills
- join an activity that supports self-care, relaxation or learning

The way these elements are delivered will vary depending on the group, but together they create the conditions for impactful peer support.

### Guiding principles

This manual covers the key elements of the MyTime program, such as opportunities for members to learn, share experiences, and receive support. Just as important as what happens in a session is how it happens. MyTime groups are guided by five core principles:

- Inclusive
- Safe
- Member-led
- Strengths-based
- Focused on building knowledge and skills

You'll find practical tips for bringing these principles to life in the separate printed [Guiding Principles Handbook](#). This resource was designed with MyTime facilitators and captures ideas from MyTime groups across the country.