

Supports for My Child at Their Weekday Program

Created for mothers by Helen Bourke-Taylor PhD©



Research with mothers of children with a disability shows that appropriate supports around their child at their weekday program makes a big difference to stress. Examples of weekday programs can include early intervention or school, or for teenagers and adults it could be a day program, further education or an employment setting.

Mothers say that the knowledge that their child is happy, learning and participating in programs outside the home is a prerequisite to their own capacity to work or enjoy other activities. Mothers dedicate a lot of time to ensuring that their child receives reasonable and necessary supports. However, organising these supports can be a complicated process involving assistance from others. The research shows that appropriate supports benefit both the child and the mother. Time dedicated to this area of your child's life is worth the effort.



What does support at your child's weekday setting look like?

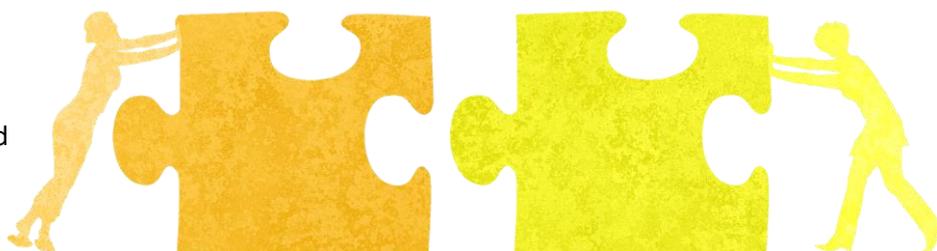
- staff who understand your child's needs and how to provide the 'just right' support. 'Just right' support means doing enough for your child, but not too much, so that your child is as involved as they want to be.
- enough time with supports
- the right type of support (for example, 1:1 support, or just help as needed)
- suitable resources and appropriate activities to support your child's participation
- settings where your child's rights are respected and maintained
- a place where your child wants to go.

So what can I do?

Every child or young person with a disability has different support needs at their weekday setting. You and your child are experts in your child's capabilities and need for support. If your child does attend a weekday setting, communicate openly with staff if you feel unsure of the supports your child is receiving, or if you have any concerns. If need be, ask staff at the setting how you can best communicate any concerns, and if a formal meeting is possible. In some instances, you can obtain support workers, carers, aides and other staff to support your child's participation at their weekday setting. Find out about any other supports available at the service.

Planning meetings prior to starting any program or school is vital. A detailed care plan should be in place with any service. Also, be aware of your child's rights at their educational or other setting. Is the setting providing the reasonable and necessary supports to enable your child to be involved? Are there instances where your child's rights are not being protected?

If you have any concerns, discuss this with your supports, trustworthy disability organisations and disability advocates.



The time and effort dedicated to organising supports is beneficial to your child, your own, and your family's well-being.

Visit our website at <http://www.healthymothers-healthyfamilies.com/> for references and more information.

If this fact sheet has raised any concerns, please seek medical advice from your local GP. Alternatively, please call LifeLine on 13 11 14 or Carers Australia, who can provide short-term counselling and emotional support for carers and families, on 1800 242 636.

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