Support services for children and families

Support for children

Local doctor
Talk to your General Practitioner (GP) about local services that are appropriate for you. Ask your GP if there are Medicare or other rebates for specialist services that you can access.

Paediatrician
Children are generally referred to a paediatrician by a GP seeking expert medical advice. Paediatricians focus on the medical problems and development of children. Ask your paediatrician if there are Medicare or other rebates for specialist services that you can access.

Maternal and Child Health/Child and Family Health
Provide a primary health service, free for all families with children from birth to school age. The service supports families in the areas of parenting, health and development; promotes family health, wellbeing and safety; gives referrals; and helps link families with local communities. Details about your local service are usually provided upon the birth of your child, otherwise ask your GP.

Paediatric physiotherapist
Deals with child development, and provides assessment and intervention for disorders that affect movement, which may be of physical or psychological origin. Visit the Australian Physiotherapy Association website at www.physiotherapy.asn.au/findaphysio to find a physiotherapist in your area.

Paediatric occupational therapist
Specialises in sensory processing, gross and fine motor development, and developmental skills such as self-care. Visit the Occupational Therapy Australia website at www.otaus.com.au/find-an-occupational-therapist to find an occupational therapist in your area.

Speech pathologist
For communication, language, feeding and swallowing difficulties. Visit the Speech Pathology Australia website at www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au to find a speech pathologist in your area.

Audiologist

Optometrist
For assessment of vision in infants and young children. Visit the Optometrists Association of Australia website at www.optometrists.asn.au to find an optometrist in your local area.

Psychologist
For mental health, including assessment and therapy of emotional and behavioural difficulties and cognitive development. Visit the website of the Australian Psychological Society at www.psychology.org.au to find a psychologist in your local area.

Other mental health professionals
Can provide assessment, therapy and support to children and families experiencing mental health concerns. This includes professionals such as speech pathologists, occupational therapists and social workers. Links for speech pathologists and occupational therapists are listed above. Visit the website of the Australian Association of Social Workers at www.aasw.asn.au/membersdirectory to find a social worker in your local area.
Support for families

Relationships Australia
Provides relationship support services for individuals, families and communities to achieve positive and respectful relationships. Services offered include counselling, family dispute resolution (mediation) and a range of family and community support and education programs. Visit www.relationshiops.org.au to find a service in your local area.

Family Relationships Online
Provides all families (whether together or separated) with access to information about family relationship issues, ranging from building better relationships to dispute resolution. It also allows families to find out about a range of services (online and in person) that can assist them to manage relationship issues, including agreeing on appropriate arrangements for children after parents have separated. Visit www.familyrelationships.gov.au for more information.

Children of Parents with a Mental Illness (COPMI)
Provides information for family members across Australia who have a parent experiencing a mental illness, and for people who care for and work with them. The overall aim of the initiative is to promote better mental health outcomes for children (0–18 years) of parents experiencing a mental illness. Visit www.copmi.net.au for more information.

Playgroups
Playgroups provide a friendly environment for children to develop friendships and social skills, and for parents and carers to connect and develop support networks with other parents and carers. See www.playgroupaustralia.com.au to find groups in your local area.

Local libraries, councils and neighbourhood houses
Here children can develop and practise social skills by participating in group activities like holiday programs and story time. Parents and carers can connect with other families. See your local council website to find resources in your local area.

Supporting parenting

Raising Children Network
Funded under the Australian Government’s Stronger Families and Communities Strategy, this is a national website aimed at helping families care for their children. It contains information about child development and parenting at www.raisingchildren.net.au.

KidsMatter Early Childhood
Offers a range of resources about children’s social and emotional development and their mental health. Visit www.kidsmatter.edu.au.

Early Childhood Australia
Produces the Everyday Learning Series, booklets that offer everyday ways to support children’s growth and development, for parents and carers. See www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/everyday_learning_series.html for more information.

Australian Childhood Foundation
A national organisation that is aimed at protecting children and preventing abuse and violence. They have a range of useful resources for families available in multiple languages at www.childhood.org.au.

Kidscount
Has been developed by the Australian Childhood Foundation and provides useful information about parenting for families, which is available in multiple languages at www.kidscount.com.au.

Parent Easy Guides
Provide simple and easy-to-read information for parents of children aged from birth to adolescence. See www.parenting.sa.gov.au to search for topics.
Parent Line
A telephone hotline that provides support, counselling and advice to parents and carers on any topic related to parenting. The hotline is run in all states and territories of Australia, and in some of these operates on a 24/7 basis. See www.parentline.com.au/getting-help/who-else-can-help/other-helpline-services for the phone number and hours of operation in your state or territory.

Centre for Community Child Health
Supports and empowers communities to improve children’s health and wellbeing. A range of resources and publications is available at www.rch.org.au/ccch.

Your local Community Health Centre
Ask for parent education and support workshops.

Migrant Information Centres
Assist migrant families by providing family and child support, and parent education programs. Check with your local council for these services in your area.

Mental health support services

Lifeline
Lifeline is a 24/7 telephone hotline that provides support and counselling for any mental health topic. Call 13 11 14 or visit www.lifeline.org.au/Home.

beyondblue
A national, independent, not-for-profit organisation working to address issues associated with depression, anxiety and related substance-use disorders in Australia. Their mission is to provide a national focus and community leadership to increase the capacity of the broader Australian community to prevent depression and respond effectively. Information on mental health topics is available at www.beyondblue.org.au in the ‘Get information’ tab. beyondblue has partnered with Multicultural Mental Health Australia to provide information about depression in a number of languages. This information has been translated by accredited translators with input from mental health professionals and consumers.

Post and Antenatal Depression Association Inc. (PANDA)
The PANDA telephone hotline provides support and counselling to new parents who may be experiencing postnatal depression.

Call 1300 726 306; 9.00 am–7.00 pm AEST, Monday–Friday

Your local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
Provides information, consultation, assessment and treatment for children and their families who may be experiencing mental health difficulties.
Parental help telephone lines

Australian Breast Feeding Association
1800 686 268

Immunisation enquiries
Contact local Public Health Unit

Karitane Careline
1300 227 464

Family Relationships Online
This is a national telephone service established to assist families affected by relationship or separation issues.

The Advice Line provides information on family relationship issues and advice on parenting arrangements after separation. It can also refer callers to local services that can provide assistance.

The Advice Line complements the information and services offered by Family Relationship Centres. It ensures that people who are not able to attend a centre can be helped.

Parent Line

Lifeline
13 11 14

Kids Helpline
1800 551 800

Kidsafe
Check www.kidsafe.com.au/contact.html for the phone number in your area.

Poisons Information Centre
13 11 26

Translation and Interpreter Service
13 14 50 (24 hours)

Developing fine and gross motor skills

Groups like Gymbaroo, Little Athletics, ballet, swimming, and so on

The activities that these groups offer may help children to develop gross and fine motor skills and improve sensory processing skills.

Local sporting clubs

Sporting clubs may have teams for under fives. Search ‘sporting clubs’ on your local council website.
Services in the local area

ECEC services can use this space to record the details of support services in their local area.