

Parents Helping Parents

FAQ's



How did “Parents Helping Parents” start?

Parents Helping Parents was founded by a small group of parents of children with disabilities who felt that the best, and often only, way to get current, relevant information about services and supports for their children with special needs was by speaking with other parents.

They realised, however, that not all parents have opportunities to spend time with other parents in similar situations.

Who can we assist?

Parents who might not get opportunities or have limited information resources include:

- Single parents
- Indigenous parents, recent immigrants and non-English speakers
- Parents whose children are in mainstream classes/schools
- Grandparents or other family members caring for Grandchildren with disabilities
- Families new to South Australia
- Working parents
- Parents of children with a diagnosis or identified special needs only made since starting school
- Parents with Internet access or skills
- Parents who have disabilities themselves
- Families with other disadvantages, including homelessness, domestic abuse survivors etc.

What does Parents Helping Parents do?

Parents Helping Parents is available to hold an information session at public and private schools. The session is usually held in an available classroom, hall or even staff room, usually in the morning, immediately after school starts, for about two hours.

All parents who have a child on an NEP or equivalent are invited to attend. There is no cost to families. Our Session leaders all have Police Clearance certificates. One or two parent presenters will gauge the needs of the group who attend, and share information in a relatively informal session.

We usually bring copies of relevant forms and are happy to help parents with applications.

What kind of information do you share?

- Did you know that many families can access up to 18 sessions of occupational therapy (at home or at school) at no cost each year?
- Did you know that the “Companion Card” will allow a carer accompanying a child with an eligible disability to a free movie ticket, and bus, tram and train tickets?
- Did you know that Carer’s Allowance will make a payment of around \$100/fortnight, not means tested, for each child in the family with a disability?
- Did you know that the eligibility for Carer Payment has changed, and that there are good reasons to apply for a Carer Payment over a Single Parent Payment, including more generous working allowances and a yearly bonus?
- Did you know that many children are eligible for half-price taxi vouchers?
- Did you know that families of children with disabilities can get free respite/babysitting on an occasional basis, and may be eligible for regular respite in or out of home?
- Did you know you might be able to have up to \$1500 of continence products delivered to your door at no cost each year?
- That your child might be able to compete at SAPSASA events and earn their red, yellow and blue hoodie?
- Did you know that there are several charities in Adelaide who might help fund special equipment or a special activity for your child with a disability?
- Do you know about the NDIS and what it might mean for your family?
- Did you know that you might be eligible for half price airfares when flying in Australia while caring?

Who presents the information?

The sessions are all led by a parent of a child with a disability who has “been there, done that”. That is our only “qualification”. We are parents of children with Cerebral Palsy, Down syndrome, hearing impairment, learning disabilities, ADHD, autism, intellectual disability, Tourette’s syndrome, seizure disorders, and chronic and acute health concerns. We learn more with every session we lead.

How do I get Parents Helping Parents to present at my child’s school?

We suggest that you sound out your child’s teacher and/or principal and then contact us to make arrangements. If you don’t want to ask the teacher or principal, just let us know and we can make enquiries of the school without mentioning you.

Please send us an email and we can have your school send a booking form (<http://parentshelpingparents.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/2014-Parents-Helping-Parents-BOOKING-FORM-and-info.pdf>) to info@parentshelpingparents.org.au and we’ll get in contact with them. We’ll talk with the principal, and usually the special education teacher, or co-ordinator to make arrangements.

What is the cost?

There is no cost to the school, volunteer led groups or parents/carers. We are all volunteers. We do suggest a fuel voucher would be a lovely gift and helps us as we each carry our own travel expenses. We do ask that service providers who request our services provide a \$100 fuel voucher, which helps us continue our work, and gets us into country areas too.

My partner and I both work. Can you do evening sessions?

We are all volunteers with families at home, so rarely do evening sessions. However, if you are interested in an evening session, please email us your details, and we'll see what we can do.

What we can't do. We are not perfect.

We are not professional social workers, psychologists, lawyers, professional advocates or therapists. While we would all consider ourselves compassionate people, and we will point parents in hopefully useful directions, we are parent volunteers, and we cannot be held responsible if the information we share is not 100% accurate or up to date. It is up to each parent to follow up on the resources that we share to confirm eligibility and availability of programs, respite, resources etc.

I want to volunteer. How can I help?

Please email us at info@parentshelpingparents.org.au and outline your skills and experience. To present with us you must be the parent/carer of a child with a disability. Your child must be at least eight years old, and you must be able to provide several references and qualify for a clean Police Clearance Check. While our volunteers are never alone with children, often the information shared by parents is private and personal, so you must be of good character, and able to abide by "What is said in the room, stays in the room". We also encourage our volunteers to undertake Mandatory Reporting Training.

I would like to donate to help your work. How can I do that?

We do not have any large expenses – just phone calls, mileage, and photocopying, but if you would like to help by contributing to help with these expenses, please contact us at info@parentshelpingparents.org.au Your generosity will be gratefully received.

I just found out about a great program for kids with disabilities – and I want you to tell families all about it!

Great! Please email info@parentshelpingparents.org.au with details and a contact phone number. We welcome anything that will help families with children with special needs.

What Parents and Carers say about Parents Helping Parents info sessions:

- "Fantastic" (MyTime)
- "Lots more services available than I was aware of" (Primary School)
- "It was awesome and informative – Thank you!" (Carer Support)
- "They have personally motivated me to be a stronger advocate for my son and have assisted to build resilience in me in order for this to happen." (Conductive Education Centre)
- "The support IS there, just have to know where to look. Thanks so much" (PreSchool)

- “Informative, empowering and encouraging” (Primary School)
- “...inspirational and gave me more information in two hours than I have ever had. My son with a disability is ten years old and you have given me so many avenues to get help from.” (Carer Support)

What service providers say:

- “Their work and information had significant weight, integrity and impact because as parents of children with a disability, they are ‘walking in the same shoes’ as those who make up their audience or in their own words, they have “been there and done that”” Carer Support
- “Their extensive knowledge in regards to resources available, medical issues and organizations that can provide assistance is impressive.” Coromandel Valley Primary School
- “They provide a much needed service in the disability community, and their personal examples allow families to really connect with the information and take it in.” Take Heart Autism Support Group
- “Some of our children have now been able to access free occupational therapy, and one family was able to arrange respite services for the first time after encouragement and resources shared by the group.” Clovelly Park Primary School
- “The presenters were very professional and respectful and their knowledge of the many services that the MyTime parents didn’t know of was invaluable... Our parents have been sharing and singing the praises of Parents Helping Parents via social media in support groups” MyTime Facilitator/Manager

