



## Handling MyTime calls – Coalition designated contact

### What you need to know

MyTime groups provide support for mothers, fathers, grandparents and anyone caring for a child with a disability or chronic medical condition. Groups provide a place to socialise, to discuss, to get information, and to support and be supported by other carers. It's a free program, which is funded by the Australian government.

Your organisation is a MyTime coalition. This means one or more of your colleagues is responsible for managing group locations, facilitators, and reporting information to the Parenting Research Centre, who are the national MyTime coordinators. There is at least one coalition in each state, and depending on where you are located there might be others in your state. The reason you have been given this information is because the Parenting Research Centre has recently made a rule that all coalitions need to provide a contact number that is generally attended during business hours. This makes sure calls get answered even if your organisation's Coalition Coordinator (the person managing MyTime) is out of the office, on leave or unexpectedly not available.

Groups are facilitated, which means each group has a facilitator who helps the group by making suggestions, providing information, planning things like session days and times, and coordinating events like guest speakers or special outings. Groups also have a play helper, who can help run activities for children brought to the group by members.

MyTime is open to all parents and carers who are eligible for the Carers Allowance (Child). The (Child) part means the children they are caring for must be below 16. Even if your organisation is focused on a specific medical condition (eg. Leukemia or Autism), groups delivered by your coalition are open to people caring for children with any condition. MyTime groups aren't diagnosis specific – all groups are open to anyone receiving the Carers Allowance (Child).

### What kind of calls will I get?

Most of the time, the people calling about MyTime are either parents or carers, or service or healthcare workers (like doctors or social workers) working with parents or carers. You will get three questions a lot about MyTime. Below you will find these questions, with a short answer you can read out to people calling.

#### *What is MyTime?*

MyTime is a place where people raising children with special needs can meet and share experiences and perspectives. Each group has a facilitator who will help plan and coordinate the group, and a play helper who can run activities for children below school age. MyTime is open to anyone who is eligible for the Carers Allowance (Child). The groups are free, and give you a chance to get some support and advice from others who are in a similar situation, as well as taking a little time for yourself.

#### *My child has a specific condition, is this group a \*condition\* group?*

MyTime groups are open to families who have a child with a disability, developmental delay or chronic medical condition. Some of the families in your peer support group may have children with the same disability or medical condition—but all of the families will share your experience of caring for a child with complex needs.

#### *Can I bring children to the group?*

You are welcome to bring children below school age, and each group has a play helper who can run activities with your children.

#### *What happens in groups?*

Every group has different activities, depending on what the members think is relevant. Sessions might include a special guest speaker, a chat over coffee about your week, an activity, or a special outing.

### Any other questions?

Your organisation's MyTime Coordinator will give you some more information on how to let people know the details of the groups in your coalition. If you have any other questions, or if you have calls you're not sure how to answer, they are the best person to speak to.