

## Guideline

# Assistance to Participants

This Guideline specifies ParentsNext Providers' responsibilities for assisting to Participants, the Service Delivery Plan and the ParentsNext Services Guarantee.

The ParentsNext Services Guarantee sets out the minimum standards all Providers must adhere to when delivering ParentsNext. In addition, each Provider has a Service Delivery Plan that outlines their strategies, approaches and activities to assist Participants.

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Related documents and references

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## Assisting Participants

Providers should deliver individually tailored assistance to each Participant to help them address barriers and prepare for future employment.

Providers must:

- have regular, minimum three-monthly, Contacts with Participants
- develop a Participation Plan with each Participant, which identifies their Education and Employment related goals and the Activities they will undertake to achieve those goals (refer to the Participation Plan Guideline)
- support Participants to access the full range of Activities and services in their local area—this can include providing, Purchasing, Brokering or arranging Activities, for Participants (refer to the Activities and Referrals Guideline)
- support Participants to improve vocational skills, for example, literacy and numeracy, training relating to a specific job and practical skills needed for Employment
- address Participants Non-vocational Barriers, which could include mental health, socio-cultural, personal, legal and environmental (such as housing) through appropriate referrals
- help Participants to increase their educational qualifications, update their skills or gain recognition of their prior skills
- support Participants who choose to look for and take up paid work, including assisting the Participant with their résumé and identifying Employment positions
- if appropriate for the Participant, refer them to and support their ongoing participation in other employment services, such as jobactive, Transition to Work and New Enterprise Incentive Scheme
- engage Participants in the Services the Provider delivers, including but not limited to, how the Provider engages with the community and other local service providers and the types of Activities the Provider offers to help Participants prepare for Employment
- provide assistance and conduct Services as outlined in their Service Delivery Plan
- assist Compulsory Participants in meeting their Mutual Obligations Requirements
- monitor Participants' participation in ParentsNext and manage any failure to participate in accordance with the ParentsNext Compliance Framework Guideline and Participation Plan Guideline.

Providers should refer to the Participant's reason for referral to ParentsNext (early school leaver, highly disadvantaged shown through the JSCI, child aged five or Volunteer) to assist in determining the assistances the Participant may require. For Participants identified as:

- early school leavers - achieving Year 12 or a Certificate III (or higher) qualification is a priority, Participants may need to undertake a Certificate I or II level to enable them to undertake a Certificate level III course
- highly disadvantaged shown through the JSCI - the Provider should review the JSCI and identify the reasons for the high score and what assistance may help in addressing this
- having a child aged five - assisting the Participant with any identified barriers and preparing to look for work, as they will soon likely move to

another employment service when their child turns six, and have job search requirements

- Volunteers - discuss with the Participant their reasons for Volunteering and assist them to address these.

Providers should:

- establish rapport with Participants, focus on their strengths and interests, and build confidence
- help Participants successfully combine planning and preparation for Employment with their parenting responsibilities
- Note: if Providers arrange child minding, crèche or babysitting facilities for Participants' children, they must adhere to the relevant working with children checks (refer to Activities and Referrals Guideline)
- assist Participants to access child care assistance under the Child Care Subsidy or Child Care Subsidy Safety Net including the Additional Child Care Subsidy, where eligible (refer to the ParentsNext—Accessing Child Care Subsidy fact sheet on the Provider Portal and the [Mychild website](#))
- connect Participants with community networks and organisations.

(Deed reference: Clause 63; Clause 72; Clause 75; Annexure B2)

## Service Delivery Plans

Providers must make available, and deliver, the services outlined in their Service Delivery Plan/s (refer to the ParentsNext Service Delivery Plan Information and Template for Providers).

(Deed reference: Clause 63)

## Engagement with other services in the community

Providers are expected to be aware of, and work cooperatively with, other programs and services provided by:

- the Australian Government
- state and local governments
- private and community organisations and stakeholders.

Providers are expected to be aware of activities and services in their area and provide Participants with advice and recommendations for Activities and facilitate referrals as required.

Refer to Activities and Referrals Guideline.

## Interpreter services

Providers must use an interpreter where the Participant requests an interpreter, or an interpreter is needed to communicate effectively with the Participant, including where a Participant requires assistance:

- on account of language or hearing barriers
- to understand complex information of a technical or legal nature
- during stressful or emotional situations
- at group forums or public consultations, where Participants do not speak or understand English, or have a hearing impairment.

Providers may need to move scheduled Initial Appointments to allow time to arrange access to an interpreter.

For further information, refer to Provider Interpreter Services Information Sheet.



**System step:** Where an interpreter is used, or where a Participant requests the use of an interpreter and the Provider refuses to provide one, the Provider must record the reason for the decision in the Comments Section on the Participant's record.

(Deed reference: Clause 64A)

### Who can be an interpreter

Where possible a qualified interpreter should be used. This can be an interpreter employed by the Provider or an external interpreter. The Provider should be aware of the risks of using a staff member to fulfil the role of both delegated decision maker and interpreter. These risks include a real or perceived conflict of interest, which may affect the Participant's participation or disclosure. The use of family or friends of the Participant to provide interpreting services is discouraged though may occur where other options are not available.

Providers may access translators and translator services through the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) through the Department of Home Affairs. More information is at the [Translating and Interpreting Service website](#).

(Deed reference: Clause 64A)

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## Involving Participants and receiving their feedback

Providers must establish feedback processes that encourage Participants to have their say in the delivery of ParentsNext Services, including the Provider's decision-making policies.

In establishing these feedback processes, Providers should consider how to best communicate and receive feedback and suggestions from Participants. Providers need to consider how to make it easy and convenient for Participants to contribute ideas. Examples could include parent consultation forums, online forums, email surveys, handouts at group sessions and/or a suggestion box.

Input into Service Delivery Strategies might include, but is not limited to:

- how the Provider engages with the local community
- how the Provider manages and establishes relationships with relevant service providers
- the types of Activities the Provider should offer to help Participants address barriers and prepare for future Employment.

Providers must detail how they will establish feedback processes to assist Participants to have their say on the delivery of ParentsNext in their Service Delivery Plan, and how these processes are utilised.

(Deed reference: Clause 24; Clause 63)

### Complaints and Customer feedback process

Providers must establish a Customer feedback and complaints handling process and tell Participants how to use it. As part of dealing with Participant Complaints, Providers must:

- explain the Customer feedback process to Participants at their Initial Appointment or during their Initial Period in ParentsNext

- ensure all Complaints received are investigated by an appropriately senior staff member
- effectively and promptly communicate to the Participant the outcome of any investigation and action the Provider is going to take in response to the Complaint, and also to the Department if requested
- when approached by the Department, actively assist:
  - the Department in its investigation of any Complaint, including responding to any requests the Department makes within the required timeframes
  - in negotiating a resolution to any Complaint
  - any other authorities in negotiating a resolution to any Complaint, where the Participant has chosen to use other legislative or complaints mechanisms.

If the Participant is dissatisfied with the results of the Customer feedback process, Providers must refer the Participant to the Department's National Customer Service Line for further investigation.

Providers must let Participants know they can make a Complaint directly to the Department, by either:

- calling the Department's National Customer Service Line on 1800 805 260 (free call from landlines) or
- using the ParentsNext Complaints, Compliments and Suggestions form on the [ParentsNext webpage](#).

(Deed reference: Clause 11; Clause 24)

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## Summary of required Documentary Evidence

Nil.

All capitalised terms in this guideline have the same meaning as in the ParentsNext Deed 2018–2021 (the Deed). This Guideline is not a stand-alone document and does not contain the entirety of ParentsNext Providers' obligations. It must be read in conjunction with the Deed and any relevant Guidelines or reference material issued by Department of Jobs and Small Business under or in connection with the Deed



Australian Government



ParentsNext

# ParentsNext Services Guarantee

## Targeted Stream

*This ParentsNext Services Guarantee reflects the Australian Government's expectations of ParentsNext Providers. It sets out the minimum level of service each Participant can expect to receive, as well as the requirements they need to meet while preparing for employment.*

The Government delivers ParentsNext through a national network of providers.

The objectives of ParentsNext are to:

- target early intervention assistance to parents at risk of long-term welfare dependency
- help parents identify their education and employment related goals and participate in activities that help them achieve their goals
- connect parents to local services that can help them address their barriers to employment.

### What you can expect from your ParentsNext Provider

Your provider will:

- treat you fairly, with respect and in a culturally sensitive way
- clearly explain your requirements to you while you participate in your ParentsNext
- identify your previous education and work experience, your strengths and any challenges you or your family face to increase your work readiness
- help you identify your education and employment related goals and work with you to develop your Participation Plan to help you achieve these goals. Your Participation Plan sets out the activities you will participate in to achieve your goals
- identify activities and services in your local community to help you to prepare for employment
- refer you to suitable activities and services that you agree to undertake
- identify education courses that will help you achieve your goals, including completing Year 12 or gaining a Certificate III or higher qualification
- connect you with local services and programs to address barriers to employment, including assistance to access child care and help to access financial assistance for child care
- advise you on the local jobs market, if required
- contact you at least every three months to review your goals and progress and work with you to update your Participation Plan
- provide you with a 'warm handover' if you are moving to a new employment service
- encouragement to be involved in the delivery of your local ParentsNext service
- reassess your needs if your circumstances change
- provide the assistance set out in the ParentsNext Service Delivery Plan.

### What is expected of you

There are some things you need to do, including:

- treat staff and other Participants at your provider fairly, with respect and in a culturally sensitive way

- make every effort to attend all contacts with your provider and the Department of Human Services (if applicable), including scheduled telephone contacts
- sign the Participation Plan containing the activities you have agreed to do
- do everything you are required or have agreed to do in your Participation Plan
- if you are required to participate in ParentsNext, attend and participate appropriately in the compulsory activity in your Participation Plan
- notify your ParentsNext Provider of any changes in your circumstances, e.g. if your address or telephone number changes.

### **If you cannot attend and appointment or activity**

- Appointments - let your ParentsNext Provider know as soon as possible prior to the event if you are unable to attend an appointment
- Activities - notify your ParentsNext Provider and, if applicable, your activity provider, as soon as possible if you are unable to attend an activity
- Provide your ParentsNext Provider with evidence to support your inability to attend an appointment or activity, e.g. a medical certificate

If you do not attend a compulsory appointment or activity listed in your Participation Plan, and do not notify your provider or have a valid reason, you will be subject to compliance action under the targeted compliance framework. This may result in your income support payment being immediately suspended until you re-engage satisfactorily with your ParentsNext Provider. If you have a history of non-compliance your payment may also be reduced or cancelled. If you are a volunteer and you are not participating satisfactorily and cannot be contacted, you will be exited from ParentsNext.

### **Your personal information is confidential**

Your personal information is protected by law, including the *Privacy Act 1988*. Your provider will only tell service providers things about you that relate to your participation in ParentsNext and related activities and services.

Your provider may also share information with the Department of Jobs and Small Business and the Department of Human Services. Your provider will check with you first before sharing personal information about you with any other government agency.

You can ask to get access to any information your provider holds about you, and have it corrected if needed.

### **Compliments, suggestions or complaints**

Your views about the assistance you receive are important. The Department of Jobs and Small Business and your provider value any feedback you may have.

If you don't think you are receiving the right help and would like to make a complaint, please talk to your provider first. Your provider will offer a feedback process, which is fair and will try to resolve your concerns.

If you feel you can't talk to your provider, or you are still not happy, you can contact the Department of Jobs and Small Business's National Customer Service Line on 1800 805 260 (free call from land lines) or email [nationalcustomerserviceline@jobs.gov.au](mailto:nationalcustomerserviceline@jobs.gov.au).

If you have suggestions to improve the assistance from your provider or would like to make a compliment about the help you have received, please let staff at your provider know or call the National Customer Service Line.

If you have any concerns about your income support payments, you should contact the Department of Human Services. Contact details for the Department of Human Services can be found at [www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)



Australian Government



ParentsNext

# ParentsNext Services Guarantee

## Intensive Stream

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*This ParentsNext Services Guarantee reflects the Australian Government's expectations of ParentsNext Providers. It sets out the minimum level of service each Participant can expect to receive, as well as the requirements they need to meet while preparing for employment.*

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The objectives of ParentsNext are to:

- target early intervention assistance to parents at risk of long-term welfare dependency
- help parents identify their education and employment related goals and participate in activities that help them achieve their goals
- connect parents to local services that can help them address their barriers to employment.

### **What you can expect from your ParentsNext Provider**

Your provider will:

- treat you fairly, with respect and in a culturally sensitive way
- clearly explain your requirements to you while you participate in ParentsNext, for those who are required to participate and for volunteers
- help you identify your previous education and work experience, your strengths and any challenges you or your family face to increase your work readiness
- help you identify your education and employment related goals and work with you to develop your Participation Plan to help you achieve these goals. Your Participation Plan sets out the assistance you will receive and the minimum requirements you need to meet if you are required to participate
- identify activities and services in your local community to help you to prepare for employment
- refer you to suitable activities and services that you agree to undertake
- identify education courses that will help you achieve your goals, including completing Year 12 or gaining a Certificate III or higher qualification
- connect you with local services, including assistance to access child care and help to access financial assistance for child care
- advise you on the local jobs market, if required
- contact you at least every three months to review your goals and progress and work with you to update your Participation Plan
- help you access services such as mentoring, training, post-placement support, work-related assistance and non-vocational assistance, that will help you prepare for work
- assist you in gaining employment through wage subsidies and relocation assistance
- reassess your needs if your circumstances change
- provide you with a 'warm handover' if you are moving to a new employment service
- encourage you to be involved in the delivery of your local ParentsNext service
- provide you the assistance set out in the ParentsNext Service Delivery Plan.

## What is expected of you

There are some things you need to do, including:

- treat staff and other fairly, with respect and in a culturally sensitive way
- make every effort to attend all contacts with your provider and the Department of Human Services (if applicable), including scheduled telephone contacts
- sign the Participation Plan containing the activities you have agreed to do
- do everything you are required to do or have agreed to do in your Participation Plan
- if you are required to participate in ParentsNext, attend and participate appropriately in the compulsory activity in your Participation Plan
- notify your provider of any changes in your circumstances, e.g. if your address or telephone number changes. If you are required to participate and fail to do any of the above, it could affect your income support payments.

### If you cannot attend and appointment or activity

- Appointments - let your ParentsNext Provider know as soon as possible prior to the event if you are unable to attend an appointment
- Activities - notify your ParentsNext Provider and, if applicable, your activity provider, as soon as possible if you are unable to attend an activity
- Provide your ParentsNext Provider with evidence to support your inability to attend an appointment or activity, e.g. a medical certificate

If you do not attend a compulsory appointment or activity listed in your Participation Plan, and do not notify your provider or have a valid reason, you will be subject to compliance action under the targeted compliance framework. This may result in your income support payment being immediately suspended until you re-engage satisfactorily with your ParentsNext Provider. If you have a history of non-compliance your payment may also be reduced or cancelled. If you are a volunteer and you are not participating satisfactorily and cannot be contacted, you will be exited from ParentsNext.

### Your personal information is confidential

Your personal information is protected by law, including the *Privacy Act 1988*. Your provider will only tell service providers things about you that relate to your participation in the ParentsNext.

Your provider may also share information with other government agencies if they need to, to make sure you are getting the right level of support. Your provider will check with you first before sharing personal information about you with any other government agency.

You can ask to get access to any information your ParentsNext provider holds about you, and have it connected if needed.

### Compliments, suggestions or complaints

Your views about the service you receive are important. The Department of Jobs and Small Business and your provider value any feedback you may have.

If you don't think you are receiving the right help and would like to make a complaint, please talk to your provider first. Your provider will offer a feedback process which is fair and will try to resolve your concerns.

If you feel you can't talk to your provider, or you are still not happy, you can contact the Department of Jobs and Small Business's National Customer Service Line on 1800 805 260 (free call from land lines) or email [nationalcustomerserviceline@jobs.gov.au](mailto:nationalcustomerserviceline@jobs.gov.au).

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If you have any concerns about your income support payments, you should contact the Department of Human Services. Contact details for the Department of Human Services can be found at [www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)