

Childcare can give you a much-needed break and give you an opportunity to do things you don't otherwise get time to do, for example spend time with your other children or return to work. Finding good quality childcare that meets the needs of your child can be difficult.

What am I looking for?

Every parent would like to find good quality, affordable care within a reasonable distance from home or work. You may also have other criteria that are important to you, or that you consider important for your child. There are a small number of centres that cater specifically for certain disabilities, such as autism. Think about what you see as barriers to accessing childcare and some potential ways to overcome them.

Is my child's development going to be disadvantaged by childcare?

Childcare has many benefits. Good quality care can cater for the various needs of children. Children who attend quality day care services tend to develop well in all areas and learn to get along with their peers.

Only family members know how to look after my child.

Some parents fear that their child's behaviour will not be appropriate or well-handled in care, and so opt for less formal arrangements such as using family members. In fact, children with disabilities in good quality care may develop better communication and social skills. They may also handle the transition to school better than children who have been cared for by family or in other arrangements that limit their access to peers. It is a good idea to consider the advantages and disadvantages of formal and informal childcare. It can be difficult to trust others to look after your child, but over time both you and your child can benefit.

What help will my child have whilst in care?

The Special Needs Subsidy Scheme (SNSS) helps with extra staffing or specialist supports for childcare centres with eligible children enrolled. You may also be able to claim a larger portion of the childcare rebate for your child with a disability. Your childcare centre will help you apply for this benefit.

TIP: There may be other supports out there for your child. For example, you might ask the therapists your child sees if they can do some of your child's sessions at the childcare centre to teach staff the same procedures you use at home.

Further information

<http://www.raisingchildren.net.au/> has information on work and childcare

<http://www.mychild.gov.au/> has articles on childcare options and rebates, and a search function to find childcare