

# Supports at Home

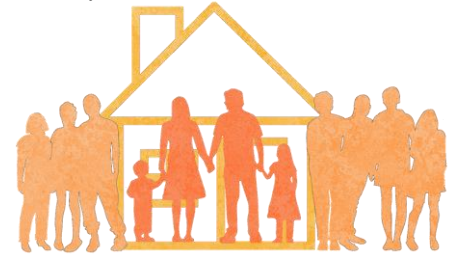
Created for mothers by Helen Bourke-Taylor PhD©



Research with mothers of children with a disability shows that supports around the mother, child and family at home make a big difference to family stress. There are numerous responsibilities for mothers raising a child with a disability. Mothers say that supports in the home can be key to maintaining a family routine that suits all family members. Supports may include formal (paid carers and support workers), or informal (family and friends) supports who can help out. Supports may also be technology or equipment that reduces the load on parents and increases comfort and safety for children. Managing supports and being empowered at home is important for you and your family.

## *Impacts of having support in the home*

- The right support can relieve pressure in families where time is always running short.
- Support at home can allow you to take time out for yourself to rejuvenate. Replenishing yourself is important.
- Support in the home can free up time with other family members.
- Initially, parents might find paid support as a bit intrusive. However, with time parents report that the benefits outweigh any initial reservations.
- Support can also benefit your child to participate in valued activities in the home and community.
- Support in the home can protect your health and well-being (i.e. lifting equipment, ramps and safe spaces).



## *Impacts of not having enough support in the home*

- possible increase in family conflict
- unfair division of labour in the home
- less enjoyable shared experiences within the family
- increased feelings of frustration and stress for all family members
- family members feeling rushed
- more difficulty providing care.

## **So what can I do?**

Understanding that support assists the flow of daily living in your family is the first step in getting the support you need. Preparing for supports may mean liaising with your child's service providers or therapists to understand any formal requirements and learn about supports that may benefit your child and family.



Investigate what might be available for your family with your support coordinator, NDIS planner or other relevant person. Learn about what different health professionals can offer. For example, occupational therapists can provide strategies, prescribe equipment or help with modifying your home to support your child's caring activities and participation.

Having paid carers in your home may feel intrusive but it is worth pursuing. Make this easier by choosing people you feel comfortable with. It increases opportunities for both you and your child. Organising someone to help assist with caring for your child is a big step, especially with activities such as toileting, showering and dressing. Spend time getting to know your child's carers, and in turn let your carer and child get to know each other. Having people you trust supporting you in the home can be rewarding for the whole family.

**Supports in the home can play a large part in you and your family's functioning and well-being.**

Visit our website at <http://www.healthymothers-healthyfamilies.com/> for references and more information.

If this fact sheet has raised any concerns, please seek medical advice from your local GP. Alternatively, please call LifeLine on 13 11 14 or Carers Australia, who can provide short-term counselling and emotional support for carers and families, on 1800 242 636.