



centrelink

## Helping Young Parents Participants

The Helping Young Parents measure was announced in the 2011–12 Federal Budget as part of the Australian Government's Building Australia's Future Workforce package.

The Helping Young Parents program will link you to locally available services that:

- assist you in caring for your children and support you to meet your parenting responsibilities
- support better health and early development for your children
- help you to prepare your children for school, including the transition from pre-school
- assist you in achieving a Year 12 Certificate or equivalent qualification.

### What is it?

From 1 January 2012, the Department of Human Services is providing extra assistance to young parents who are 19 years of age or under, receive Parenting Payment and live in one of 10 selected Local Government Areas.

When your child turns six months old we will meet with you just to see how you are doing and if there is any extra assistance we can offer. Once your child is one, we will meet with you and develop a plan that supports you to achieve your Year 12 Certificate or a Certificate II equivalent qualification. You will also be given information about local services that are available to assist you in caring for your children and support you in meeting your parenting responsibilities.

Through accessing these support services and improving your education you will build and develop valuable life skills.

When appropriate to your individual circumstances or when your child is older, this will enable you to go on to gain suitable employment.

### Where will this program be available?

This program will be available in ten Local Government Areas (LGAs):

- Bankstown, Shellharbour and Wyong (NSW)
- Logan and Rockhampton (Qld)
- Greater Shepparton and Hume (Vic)
- Playford (SA)
- Burnie (Tas), and
- Kwinana (WA)

### Who can get this extra assistance?

You can only receive this extra assistance if you receive Parenting Payment and:

- you live in one of the 10 selected Local Government Areas
- your child is between six months and six years of age
- you are 19 years old or younger, and
- you do not have a Year 12 Certificate or Certificate II equivalent qualification, or
- you have a Year 12 Certificate or Certificate II equivalent qualification and volunteer to participate.

### How will it work?

If you are eligible for the extra assistance you will need to go to interviews every six months from when your child turns six months of age until they turn six years. We'll work with you to identify activities that will help you to improve your education. We'll also help you to access local services that are available to assist you in caring for your children and meeting your parenting responsibilities. These activities will take into account your needs and circumstances, as well as those of your child.

If you don't attend your interviews, or do the activities you agreed to participate in, your payment may be stopped. You need to let Centrelink know as soon as possible if you are unable to attend your interview or participate in your agreed activities.

We understand it's important that your children are cared for while you focus on your study so we'll help you to access support services, such as child care, if required. We may also be able to provide you with help to pay for child care.

### How will this program help me?

We realise that being a young parent can be really hard. This measure aims to help you to create a positive future for yourself and your children. We want to make sure you and your children get the same opportunities as everyone else and you are supported to finish school or study.

You will also learn about local community supports and services that are available to help young parents.

### How will this program help my child or children?

Your child/ren will be able to undertake early learning childhood education to ensure their readiness for primary school.

### Will I get extra money for participating?

No. Although you may receive full or near full coverage of any child care costs while you are studying.

### What happens if I go off my payment and then return?

If you lose eligibility to your payment you will no longer be able to get the extra assistance provided under this program. If you then reclaim the payment, you must again meet the eligibility criteria to be able to access the extra assistance.

### Can my friend also get this extra assistance?

For now, the extra assistance is limited to people who meet the eligibility criteria and live in one of the 10 selected Local Government Areas. In the future, the program may be available everywhere, but for now only people who are asked to participate are able to receive the extra assistance.

### What if I move?

Your plan may need to be adjusted, but you will still be eligible to receive the extra assistance available under this program if you move.

### Can I still participate if I finish my Year 12 Certificate or a Certificate II equivalent qualification?

Yes. Once you obtain a Year 12 Certificate or Certificate II equivalent qualification you can elect to volunteer to continue getting the extra assistance available under the program.

### Can I still participate if I'm working part-time?

Yes. We will work with you to make sure you can still access the extra assistance available through this program.

### What happens in an interview?

During your interview we will discuss your needs and circumstances and those of your child. We will then provide you with information about local services that are available to assist you in caring for your children and meeting your parenting responsibilities.

We will also discuss which courses are available that match your strengths and interests. We then connect you with local service providers who can support you in achieving a Year 12 Certificate or Certificate II equivalent qualification.

We will also provide you with information or link you with other people to help support you in overcoming any other challenges you may be facing.

### How often can I attend an interview?

Interviews will be six monthly. If you need to talk to us between these scheduled interviews you can ask for an additional assistance interview at any time.

### What happens if I don't attend an interview?

Failure to attend a scheduled interview without a reasonable reason may result in suspension of your Parenting Payment.

### Can I reschedule my interview?

Yes, although there will be limits as to how many times you can reschedule your interview and you must have a valid reason for wanting to reschedule.

## What is in a Participation Plan? Are these compulsory?

Your Participation Plan will detail the education activity and any other activities you have agreed to participate in. The Plan will also include a Participation Diary that you can use to keep track of your involvement in the activities you have agreed to undertake.

## What happens when I turn 20?

Turning 20 will not change your ongoing eligibility for the extra assistance offered under this program.

## What if I'm not ready to do a Year 12 certificate or Certificate II equivalent?

We will work with you to identify how to get you to a point of being ready to do your Year 12 certificate or a Certificate II equivalent. These certificates are the end of your education journey under this program; they are not where you have to start.

## What happens if I don't participate in my plan (what happens if I am not doing an activity)?

You will be required to attend additional assistance interviews to discuss the reasons why you are not meeting the activities you have agreed to undertake.

## Are there any other penalties associated with this measure?

No.

## Do I still have to attend my other appointments?

Yes.

## Are there any changes to my current reporting requirements?

No.

## How long do I have to complete my activities in my plan?

There is no set timeframe for completion of your activities. You will be required to demonstrate progress and engagement with your agreed activities at your regular interviews.

## What happens if I have a reasonable excuse for not going to my interview or completing my activities?

A new interview will be arranged to get you reconnected to your activities.



## What happens if I am unhappy with my plan or if my plan is inappropriate?

We will work with you to change your plan to activities that do meet your individual needs and circumstances and those of your child.

## What child care is available?

There is a wide range of child care options available, such as playgroups, early learning centres and family day care providers. We will not tell you what type of child care to use. The decision on whether you use child care will be up to you.

## Who will help me with child care?

We will assist you with identifying what child care options are available for you locally.

## Who will pay for child care?

Depending on the type of child care you choose to use, the Government will subsidise all or nearly all of your child care fees while you are studying.

## What if child care is not available?

You do not need to place your child into child care. If you are concerned that without access to child care you will be unable to undertake your study, we will work with you to identify alternate study options that can be undertaken in balance with your parenting responsibilities.

## What other support is available to me?

There is a wide range of support services available in local communities. Types of services may include budgeting advice, parenting skills training, cooking tuition, parenting groups, play groups and many more.

Extra money has also been given to the Communities for Children program in the 10 selected Local Government Areas where the Helping Young Parents program is operating. This will ensure you will have access to the supports and services you need to succeed.

## What education choices do I have?

This will depend on your current level of education. We will work with you to identify a learning path that will help you achieve a Year 12 certificate or a Certificate II equivalent. This may include accessing local high schools or TAFEs. In some circumstances distance or online learning courses might be a better choice. Whatever the agreed path, we will be there to support you in figuring out how to improve your future employment options through a better education.

## What is the Helping Young Parents Community?

The Helping Young Parents Community is a space on the web where you will be able to talk with other young parents about your experiences and theirs. It contains information and blogs that will help you while participating in the Helping Young Parents program.

It also gives you the chance to talk to the people who developed the Helping Young Parents program.

Access to the community is limited to program participants and will be arranged for you during your first interviews.