

## Choosing and starting childcare

### Why childcare can help

A quality childcare or preschool experience supports children's learning, social skills, confidence, and wellbeing. It also gives parents valuable time for work, appointments, and self-care.

### What to look for

Look for services where your child will feel safe, happy, respected, and valued. When choosing a service, consider the physical environment, staff, and approach to inclusion, including:

- spaces with carpeting, rugs, and curtains help absorb extra noise and make listening easier.
- staff are welcoming and open to training and learning about your child's needs.

If a service seems unwilling or unable to provide this, it may be best to explore other options.

### Your child's rights

- All children have the right to use childcare services, regardless of disability. The Australian Disability Discrimination Act 1992 makes it unlawful for childcare services to refuse children with disability or limit their access. Services must also make reasonable adjustments to meet your child's needs and support inclusion.
- Childcare services can apply for **Inclusion Support Funding** to help meet the needs of children with disability. (See [Inclusion Support Program link](#)).

### Advocacy: Working Together Positively

As a parent, you know your child best. Share your child's needs openly with the director and educators, and work together on practical adjustments. Advocacy doesn't mean being confrontational, it's about collaborating with staff so your child has the same opportunities as their peers. Most services welcome this partnership and want to learn how they can best support your child.

