

THE CHILD & FAMILY COUNSELLING SERVICE



What is the Child & Family Counselling Service?

The Child and Family Counselling Service provides support to families throughout their journey with The Shepherd Centre, and can be accessed at each of our five centres.

Our Child and Family Counsellors (CFCs) come from a range of professional backgrounds, such as Social Work, Psychology, Psychotherapy and/or Counselling and Family Therapy. They have a wealth of experience in working with children and families and are committed to supporting families and helping them reach their goals.

Why meet with a Child & Family Counsellor?

The diagnosis of a child with a hearing loss or a special need can be a very difficult time for families. It usually involves having to negotiate a range of services, attend many appointments, come to terms with your child's hearing loss, at the same time as continuing with the day to day joys and challenges of parenthood. The role of our CFCs is to assist families in adjusting to these challenges, to build upon family strengths and to identify resources and services to ensure families are getting the support they need.

The CFCs can support families in a range of areas, which include:

- Managing the everyday demands of parenthood
- Bonding and developing relationships with your baby, child or children
- Any concerns you may have following the diagnosis of your child's hearing loss or how their hearing loss is being managed
- Decision making around your child's care plan or choice of hearing devices
- Support around your child's development and managing challenging behaviours
- Managing family and sibling relationships
- Grief and loss issues
- If you (or a member of the family) are having difficulty coping or experiencing mental health difficulties
- Advocating for your child or family
- Preparing your child for school
- Information and referral to a range of support services
- Families who may feel isolated or experiencing financial difficulties
- Any other issues that may be impacting on your wellbeing or that of your family

How do Child & Family Counsellors work with families?

Your first appointment at The Shepherd Centre will be with one of the CFCs who will explain the service and gather information on the current needs and circumstances of your child and family. Following this appointment, you can arrange to meet with a CFC at any time. The CFCs provide individual and family counselling sessions, which can be provided face to face, by phone or over Skype. A CFC may also contact you from time to time to see how your family is managing and to enquire if there is any assistance you may need.

The CFCs work closely with your Listening and Spoken Language Specialist and Audiologist. At your request, we can attend your Individual Family Service Plan meeting and provide support in any therapy sessions.

Group Programs

It is likely you will meet a CFC at one of the many groups held at The Shepherd Centre. We coordinate the Parent/Carer Group, which is a part of the weekly Kidscape Playgroup held at each centre. In the Parent Group, we run reflective and strengths-based parenting programs and provide the opportunity for families to meet one another to share their journeys and experiences. Throughout the year, we arrange guest speakers to attend the Parent Group. We also facilitate the parent education group as part of the 'Hear We Go' School Readiness Program, which is held every year at each of our five centres.

What do I do if I'd like to talk to a Child & Family Counsellor?

You can make a request to meet with the CFC at your centre by contacting any member of the clinical team, or by calling your local centre to make an appointment.

For any questions about the counselling service please contact the CFC at your local centre.



"What I loved most about coming to The Shepherd Centre soon after my child was diagnosed with a hearing loss, is that it was like a 'one stop' shop where at any time you could speak with a therapist, an Audiologist or a counsellor. It was especially helpful meeting with a counsellor who understood the area of hearing loss and what our family was going through"



T: 02 9370 4400
W: www.shepherdcentre.org.au
E: enquiries@shepherdcentre.org.au
Facebook: /ShepherdCentre
Twitter: @ShepherdCentre