

Top Tips

Applications for Community and Family Support (CAFS) Locally-Applied Parenting Programs and Supported Playgroups

October 2025

Below are some tips to help you when completing applications to seek approval to deliver locally-applied parenting program or supported playgroup model under the CAFS program:

1. **Look at the description of the program or model provided and determine if there is enough information included to demonstrate that it is either a supported playgroup or parenting program.** It is important the model/program aligns with the correct service type description in the [CAFS program specifications](#).
 - We have seen some forms where it is unclear if the model being proposed is a community playgroup or a supported playgroup. Supported Playgroups provide children with an opportunity to socialise, play and learn in a structured and positive environment as well as participating in age-appropriate learning experiences and activities to help them become school ready. Supported playgroups are facilitated by a professional and qualified worker and are a more targeted service model for families with particular needs or vulnerabilities, compared to community playgroups. Community playgroups are informal gatherings where babies, toddlers and pre-school aged children and their parents or carers can come together to learn through play and connect with one another.
 - Parenting programs need to have a structured format and be aimed at strengthening parent-child relationships through education, knowledge or practical skill building. One-off sessions rather than multiple sessions could potentially indicate an education and skills training service type rather than a parenting program.
2. **The level of detail you should provide about the model or program to be delivered is dependent on if you are delivering a well-known manualised program (for example Circle of Security or Bringing up Great Kids) compared to if you are proposing a model that has been self-developed.** If the program/model is self-developed and/or the information is not widely available or public, the assessors will likely need more information from the provider. To avoid delays in processing your application, please ensure there is adequate information in the application to explain:

- How the program is run and whether it follows a curriculum or program guide with specific content covered each session.
 - What is the facilitator to parent/child ratio (supported playgroup).
 - What training facilitators have that equip them with the necessary skills to provide the program, noting that some programs require staff to have certain qualifications.
 - What does the program do for parents and/or children.
3. **For programs that have been modified or self-developed, consider providing an attachment that outlines how a supported playgroup or parenting program is implemented (for example a session outline plan).** This level of detail will be extremely helpful for the assessors to ensure it meets the service type definition and is appropriate for the intended target group.
 4. **If a service provider references evidence, please provide a link to the evidence or include it as an attachment.** This will help the assessors to make a decision quickly.
 5. **If a provider is nominating multiple programs/models in a form, they should make sure that it is clear which program they are referring to in each section.** If they find it is not possible to do this with one form, they can submit multiple forms.
 6. **Make sure you have demonstrated that the evidence-informed parenting programs list has been considered.** We have seen applications where there are parenting programs on the evidence-informed list which address the needs of particular target groups (for example, children with anxiety or adolescents) but a provider has requested to deliver another program. The reasons for not choosing a program from the list in these instances should be clearly explained. There should be a valid reason and explanation for choosing another program over a suitable program demonstrated to have positive outcomes from the evidence-informed list (i.e. not just preference).
 7. **The standard timeframe for assessing applications is one to two weeks.** If you need a decision within a shorter timeframe, please indicate in your email the date you need this by. We will aim to accommodate your request, however, due to a large number of applications currently being received this may not always be possible so you should aim to submit your application early to ensure you meet your contract negotiation timelines.