What can a Family Services Worker offer you?

*A Family Services Worker in the Family Services program will:*

* work with your family to find out each family members strengths; what is working well in your family, and what things you would like to change.
* work together with your family to support you to make the changes that will help you and your family do **less** of the things that are making life tough and **more** of the things that make life easier and happier for you all.
* meet with their supervisor regularly (once a fortnight )to be accountable for the work they do with you and your family and to make sure the ideas for your family are good ideas!

**RESPECT is the key value that underpins a family services worker**

***The kinds of work that a family services worker will do with your family:***

Meet with your family in your home, sometimes alone with the parent/s, sometimes with the kids and sometimes with all of the family to get everyone’s perspectives.

***With parents:***

A family services worker will talk to parents about their needs, concerns, hopes and ideas that can include information about your past, your family life as a child, and your parenting style.

***and can help with:***

* Stress Management & Anger Management ideas
* Making referrals to other services such as counselling, domestic violence, support groups and other relevant services.
* Working with other agencies such as housing, mental health, financial and health services to ensure you are well supported
* Goal setting – such as making up family guidelines (rules), positive parenting strategies, working towards a healthy lifestyle, holding family meetings, working on family routines, teaching new skills
* Finding out about school holiday programs, childcare and recreational/support services in your neighbourhood
* Advocating on your behalf across a range of areas by supporting you when you work with other agencies or people who you have difficulty communicating with, or writing letters of support in areas such as housing

***With children:***

* Can talk with children about their strengths, interests, concerns and ideas, and help them work through difficult problems or emotions. I listen to children and take on board their good ideas
* Make visits to schools, kindergarten or childcare, or talk with grandparents to get a good understanding of the other important people and places in your children’s lives.
* Work creatively with ideas (drawing, collage, games, catch up chats, dealing with bullies and play) to help children make the changes in their lives that they would like to make.
* Include children in behaviour change plans (such as behaviour charts, quiet time / time out, chores, family rule making) and processes – so that they will take ownership of trying out new ways of doing things.
* Make referrals where necessary – to support or therapeutic group programs, mental health services, educational services or health service



***A family services worker***

* Will try to to be as flexible as possible in working within your family’s timetable and always be honest and be as transparent as possible. You can always feel free to ask them any questions you are not clear about, ask them why they ask a particular question or are trying out a new strategy or idea!
* Will work for your family back at the office – this might include making phone calls, consulting with other professionals and finding out about the services available in your area.
* Will undertake training to bring lots of new ideas for you and your family to try out!



**Your Role:**

Your role as a parent  is to be brave and to try something new! The only way change can happen is by trying to do something differently from how you have been doing it before. The other thing a family service worker will ask of you is that you let them know ahead of time if you can’t make an appointment. They are happy to give you a reminder call if needed prior to your appointment.

* They will try to to be as flexible as possible in working within your family’s timetable and be honest and as transparent as possible
* You can feel free to ask them any questions if you are not clear about why they ask a particular question or why they are trying out a new strategy or idea!
* They also do work for your family back at the office – this might include making phone calls, consulting with other professionals and finding out about the services available in your area.
* They undertake training to bring lots of new ideas for you and your family to try out!



**How long your family services worker will work with you and your family**

The amount of time a family service worker works with each family varies. They meet with most families for about an hour and a half once a week. They usually set the family or certain members of the family tasks to do in between visits. Some family’s have lots of things they want to work on and it may take a long time to work on them one at a time – it could be from 6 months to over a year.

Other families have one or two specific issues they would like help with. A family service worker may only need to work with your family for 3 to 6 months to help you and your family achieve the goals you have decided to work towards.