



**Getting parents
ready for 'Next'.**



THE KNOW-HOW AND THE CONFIDENCE TO BE WORK-READY WHEN THE TIME COMES.

It happens in the blink of an eye, one moment your kids are a full-time job and then they are off to school. The Salvation Army Employment Plus is here to help you prepare for that stage through the ParentsNext program.

Whilst parenting has sharpened your survival techniques, time management skills and helped you develop your negotiating expertise, we understand that you may feel a little nervous about what comes next once your child begins school. And while that day may still be a few years away, having a plan now can help you ease the stress, and help you develop the skills and techniques to achieve your goals, whether it's a smooth entry into the workplace, a return to study or something else. We'll be working with you every step of the way until your youngest child turns six years old, to help you identify what you want to achieve, and take the steps needed to get there.

WHAT IS PARENTSNEXT?

ParentsNext is a free support program to help eligible parents plan and prepare for employment by the time their youngest child turns six.

The Employment Plus ParentsNext program is available to parents who:

- Have been receiving parenting payments for the past six months
- Have not received employment income during the past six months
- Have a child aged under six years

ParentsNext is about working with you to help set your education and employment goals, develop a pathway to achieve these goals and link you to support services and activities in the local community.

UNSURE ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT?

While we will work with you to develop a plan that suits you and your family, we understand that not everybody feels able or ready to start planning and preparing to enter or return to the workforce. Sometimes life can get in the way. If you are unsure about your involvement in ParentsNext, and feel unable to commit to anything, it is important you discuss this with your Career Coach. Exemptions (meaning you don't have to participate in activities for an agreed period of time) may be granted in some situations – for example, for parents or carers with serious health issues, those in the later stages of a pregnancy, or those who have experienced a recent death in the family.



WHAT HAPPENS IN PARENTSNEXT

First appointment

At your first appointment, you will meet your ParentsNext Career Coach, who will be with you along the way. This appointment is more of a 'getting to know you' session, as your Coach looks to understand your family and your situation, what interests you, how we can best support you, and any education and employment goals you may have. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions you have about the ParentsNext program and your involvement.

Before your first appointment, it's worth taking some time to think about the things that interest you, any concerns you may have, and the kind of work you might like to do in the future.



FROM THERE:

APPOINTMENTS

You will meet with your ParentsNext Career Coach regularly after your initial appointment. These appointments are a chance to talk to your Coach about any education and employment goals you have identified, and to discuss your progress and any support that you may need. You will need to attend an appointment at least once every three months to meet your participation requirements.

PARTICIPATION PLAN

Your Career Coach will work with you to prepare a 'Participation Plan'. This plan records your education and employment goals, and outlines the activities, reporting requirements and appointments you need to meet. This plan is tailored to suit you, your situation and your goals – ensuring that the activities and requirements in the plan are achievable and accommodate your parenting responsibilities.

ACTIVITIES

You will need to complete the activities detailed in your Participation Plan. These activities are intended to help you increase your skills and prepare for work, and may include work preparation activities, training and education, attending workshops or playgroup. You will need to choose activities that are a suitable fit with your family life and education/employment goals. If an activity no longer suits you or doesn't work out, please let your Career Coach know – we understand that circumstances change, and it's important that we can adjust your plan straight away so that you can get the most out of it.

REPORTING

You may be asked to do two kinds of reporting: to Centrelink (either via the myGov or Express Plus Centrelink app) and to ParentsNext (via the job seeker app). Your ParentsNext Participation Plan will record what you need to do to report your activities. Be sure to make a note of the day you need to report by – If you don't report by close of business on that day, your payments will be put on hold and you will need to contact us to arrange for it to be reinstated through Centrelink.



WHAT TO EXPECT FROM US

Your ParentsNext Career Coach is part of your community, and they will always be on hand to guide and support you, and address any concerns you have. We are committed to listening and taking the time to understand you and your situation. We will work with you to ensure that you remain in charge of your situation and your future, with our support, guidance and assistance along the way.

Connecting you with local services

We have a network of services and organisations we work with to support our participants, and we can connect you with a range of suitable services in your area. These may include parenting groups, financial counselling, emotional support, child care, education and English language classes. Your Career Coach will talk with you about the different services and supports available in your area, but if there is anything in particular that you need help with, please let your Career Coach know. Each of our ParentsNext sites are located within Salvation Army corps (buildings), which enables you to make full use of the support services and programs they offer.

We are here to support you, with no judgement, no assumptions and no excuses. In turn, there are a few things we request of you...



WHAT WE EXPECT OF YOU

We are here to support you as best we can, but to do so, we need you to be open and honest with us, and to let us know as soon as anything changes.

If you can't meet a requirement (signing your Participation Plan, attending an appointment or activity or reporting your attendance), it is important that you tell your Career Coach beforehand. Failing to do so could result in your parenting payment being put on hold, which is something we want to help you avoid.

We understand that sometimes things crop up at the last minute, and you might not be able to contact your Coach before a scheduled appointment or activity. If you do miss a requirement, contact your Coach as soon as possible so they can reschedule it.

If you are having trouble reporting your attendance at activities, talk to your Coach. They can report your activity attendance on your behalf. This means you will need to tell your Coach when you have attended your activity, or make sure they can contact you to confirm you attended. You will need to have a valid reason for not attending an appointment or meeting a requirement, or you may get a demerit. If you keep failing to meet your requirements over time without a valid reason, you may lose part of your parenting payment – or have it cancelled.



COMMON QUESTIONS:

Are you the same as jobactive?

No, jobactive is an employment services program that focuses on getting people job-ready and into work. Unlike jobactive, ParentsNext is a pre-employment program. This means that it's focused on helping you to consider your education and employment goals, and map out a plan for how you can achieve it.

Can you pay for a course?

Eligible ParentsNext participants may be able to access government funding to help cover the costs of training, education and other related expenses. Your Career Coach will discuss with you any funding that you are eligible to receive.

What if I'm not ready to go to work?

We understand that the prospect of joining or returning to the workforce while caring for your family may seem overwhelming for some. Our role as your ParentsNext provider isn't to push you into work before you're ready. Instead, it is our role to work with you to determine your education and employment goals, help you develop a plan to achieve these goals, and provide the support and guidance you need along the way.

However, if you are still unsure about your involvement in ParentsNext, and feel unable to commit to anything, it is important you discuss this with your Coach.



MAKING A COMPLAINT

If you have any suggestions to improve the services we provide, or if you feel that our service has not met your expectations, we encourage you to speak with us as soon as possible. We take all feedback seriously, and will do all we can to try and resolve the matter and ensure you receive the support you need. You can call us on **136 123** or visit us at **employmentplus.com.au/contact-us**. If you do not feel comfortable talking with us about the matter, you can contact the Department of Education, Skills and Employment's National Customer Service Line on **1800 805 260** (free call from landlines) or visit **employment.gov.au/feedback-and-enquiry-form**.

YOUR PRIVACY

Your personal information is protected by law, including the Privacy Act 1988. Your ParentsNext Career Coach will provide you with a Privacy Notification and Consent form that outlines how your information will be used. We will only use your personal information for the purpose of providing pre-employment services and helping you access support from other government agencies. We will check with you first before sharing any of your information with other government agencies.

You can choose not to sign the consent form and your sensitive information (e.g. medical information) will not be passed on. This may limit the services your ParentsNext Coach can help you with.



Australian Government



ParentsNext

ABOUT US

As a proud member of The Salvation Army network and one of the largest government-funded employment service providers in Australia, it is our mission to change lives and communities through the power of employment.

We have delivered the ParentsNext program in Adelaide since the government first launched the program in 2018. But our history extends far beyond then. The Salvation Army Employment Plus has been connecting job seekers with employers for more than 20 years. In fact, we've placed more than half a million people in jobs in more than 200,000 businesses.

With access to more jobs in more locations, we work with job seekers and participants to understand their strengths and interests, enabling us to better help them find (and sustain) education or employment that meets their needs.

As a not-for-profit organisation, any surplus we make is directed back into The Salvation Army's social programs – providing relief to the homeless, victims of disaster and anyone who needs a helping hand.

Want to know more?
We're here to help

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 employmentplus.com.au/parentsnext