

# Getting the most from ParentsNext

Advice for existing participants



While ParentsNext has received negative media coverage in recent months, YFS maintains that it's a great program. In the past three years, it's helped more than 6000 parents in the Logan area prepare for the workforce.

In July 2018, the Federal Government changed ParentsNext to attach a Targeted Compliance Framework to it.

This requires parents to report their activities in order to keep receiving the Parenting Payment.

At YFS we don't think the Targeted Compliance Framework is necessary.

We think most parents *want* to get ahead so they can be good role models for their kids and be financially independent.

But we need to work with it.



## Here are our tips for getting the most out of ParentsNext

1. ParentsNext is designed to help you be ready to work when your youngest turns six, so you don't end up on Newstart.
2. ParentsNext is about *your* personal goals – ParentsNext can't make you work or study if you don't want to. They can't make you go to playgroup or story time either.
3. As a ParentsNext participant you *do* have to come up with an activity that you want to do that helps you reach your goals eventually. This could be looking into jobs you're interested in, or taking your child to appointments.
4. ParentsNext participants have access to funds to help them pursue their goals – ask your provider about this.
5. Your ParentsNext provider should help you come up with ways to report on your activities so you don't have payments suspended.
6. If you forget to report or you miss an appointment, ring your ParentsNext provider straight away so they can reinstate your payments.

Contact our ParentsNext workers on 3826 1500 for further advice.





## YFS ParentsNext client “wouldn’t change a thing about it”

### **Single mum Kelly says the YFS ParentsNext program helped open her eyes to her own potential.**

Kelly has been a ParentsNext client since mid 2017 and in that timeframe, she says the service has opened her to opportunities she had not considered.

“In my first few months with ParentsNext, I didn’t know why I was connected to the service,” Kelly said. “I was in a such a negative space that I didn’t like attending. I thought that I didn’t need help to improve my life.

“It wasn’t until I had conversations with my case manager about studying that I started enjoying ParentsNext. She was a fresh face. She listened to my problems. She couldn’t solve them all but she was there, offering support and backing me.”

Before Kelly connected with YFS’ ParentsNext team, she was a busy mum raising two young children.

Kelly had been away from the workforce and didn’t realise the skills she learnt from her former employer, the Queensland Government, were a little out of date.

“Kelly worked tirelessly searching for jobs,” YFS ParentsNext manager Rachel Smith said. “After being overlooked by potential employers, she recognised the need to update her job skills.

“Initially, she undertook voluntary work for a couple of not-for-profit organisations in a bid to update her administrative skills, but we soon realised that wasn’t enough.”

That’s when Kelly enrolled in a Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing, Home and Community).

“I had never completed a course in my life, so it was a big step for me to take,” Kelly said. “Rachel helped me realise that I had the potential within me to change my career. She helped me unlock my potential.

“When I finished the certificate III, I applied for jobs but I didn’t get to the next step. I knew that was ok because I wanted to study further and build on the skills that I learned in the certificate, but more along the mental health side.”

Kelly is now studying the Certificate IV in Mental Health.

“Because of ParentsNext, I became open to the concept of looking after my wellbeing,” she said. “The depression I was experiencing encouraged me to seek a mental health care plan from my GP.

**“ParentsNext has helped me greatly. I wouldn’t change a thing about it.”**