

Maternal and Child Health and Early Parenting Centre services

Victorian Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and Early Parenting Centre (EPC) services play a vital role in supporting healthy, thriving, growing and learning children and families across Victoria.

These free services welcome families from all cultures, identities, backgrounds and abilities including First Nations families, multicultural families, and LGBTIQ+ families.

All parents and carers, including mums, dads, grandparents, kinship or other carers are welcome.



Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services

MCH services support Victorian families and carers with children from birth until they start school. MCH services also support the health, wellbeing and parenting journey of parents, carers and families. MCH services may be provided at home, a centre or on the phone by calling the MCH Line.

MCH Line – 13 22 29

The confidential 24 hour, 7 days a week MCH Line provides information and advice about the care and health of your child.

When you call, qualified MCH nurses can discuss your concerns about child health and nutrition, breastfeeding, your own health and any parenting questions.



Find out more about the MCH Line on the Better Health Channel <<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/serviceprofiles/maternal-and-child-health-line>>

Universal MCH program

Delivered in your local community, the Universal MCH program provides 10 check-in appointments at key ages and stages of your child's development. The first visit is within two weeks of your baby's birth or arrival home.

Your MCH nurse can help you with:

- feeding your baby
- learning about baby cues, behaviour, bonding and attachment, sleep and settling
- growth and development, including measuring and weighing your baby
- becoming a parent/carer and looking after yourself, including your mental health
- connection to other families through new parent groups.



To receive this document in another format email [Maternal and Child Health and Early Parenting Unit](mailto:mch@health.vic.gov.au) <mch@health.vic.gov.au>.

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MCH nurses can also connect you with additional support through the Sleep and Settling outreach and Enhanced MCH programs as well as other community supports including Early Parenting Centres, parenting support and community groups such as playgroups.

Accessing your local MCH service

If you haven't heard from a MCH nurse within two weeks of going home with your baby, you can contact your local MCH service or the MCH Line.



Find your local MCH service by using the locator tool on the Better Health Channel <<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/maternal-and-child-health-services>>

Aboriginal MCH program

Aboriginal MCH services provide free culturally safe care for families with children from birth to school age who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. You can choose to use the Aboriginal MCH service at your local Aboriginal community organisation.



Find your local Aboriginal MCH service on the Better Health Channel <<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/maternal-and-child-health-services#aboriginal-mch-services>>

Extra support through the Enhanced MCH program

Some Victorian families face extra challenges and may benefit from more support through the Enhanced MCH program.

The Enhanced MCH program provides free extra support for parents and carers of children aged birth to 3 years.

Speak to your MCH nurse if you need extra help through the Enhanced MCH program.



Find out more about the EMCH program on the Better Health Channel <<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/maternal-and-child-health-services#extra-support-through-the-enhanced-mch-emch-program>>

Early Parenting Centres (EPCs)

EPCs provide specialist support for Victorian families with children aged up to 4 years. EPCs offer programs to strengthen parenting skills, enhance parent-child relationships and support family wellbeing.

EPCs can help your family with:

- sleep and settling
- child behaviour and development
- parent and child health
- building confidence and community connections.

Programs include:

- **overnight stay:** Stay at the centre for intensive support over a week
- **day stay:** Centre-based day programs.

To access an EPC, ask your MCH nurse, GP or health professional, call the MCH Line (13 22 29), or refer yourself by contacting your local EPC.



You can find your local EPC on the Better Health Channel <<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/parenting-centres-support-families>>

