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**Parents Offered Time Out at MyTime@Tweddle**

Tweddle knows it's not easy being a parent, it's been helping vulnerable parents and their children for over 90 years. Throw in the challenges of having one or more children disabled or chronically ill and life can go from hard to extremely tough.

To help these parents, Tweddle runs MyTime, a weekly peer support group for parents of children up to school age with a disability or chronic medical condition. Tweddle's MyTime groups are located across Melbourne's west in Altona Meadows, Footscray, Hillside, Point Cook, Deer Park and Hoppers Crossing. The groups run every school term for eight weeks and can accept up to ten families.

"When families find out their child has a disability it is often devastating and isolating even resulting in the loss of friendships" says Tweddle's MyTime coordinator Eleni Matskarofski. "MyTime is about forming new friendships with parents and carers in a similar situation. The groups are a great opportunity to meet with others and discuss things that are both important and relevant to their situation."

MyTime parents are often extremely busy attending to treatments, therapies, medication, groups and appointments. Parents tell us how a hot cup of coffee or tea is a miracle when there's so much to do. MyTime gives parents a chance to stop while play helpers provide activities to keep children engaged so members can meet and talk with others. Parents can get to know each other, discuss research and link in to their community and find other local services.

Eleni says "We often get positive feedback from parents. A MyTime mum recently said "Through MyTime I have gained the friendship, information and support (not to mention a new hairdresser!) that would otherwise have been very difficult to find. I think I have missed only 2 or 3 meetings - and not by choice. MyTime has given me confidence, friendships and the knowledge that I have helped others through the grief process just by sharing my story".

**Features of MyTime:**

- For parents and carers of newborn to school aged disabled or chronically ill children
- Friendly and relaxed environment
- Guest speakers and group outings
- Supported by a facilitator and children's play helpers
- Weekly morning groups Mon-Thurs between 9.30-11.30
- Groups at Altona Meadows, Deer Park, Footscray, Hoppers Crossing, Hillside, Point Cook

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