

# Help is at hand

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## PARENTING

Caroline James

**A**LMOST one in 10 children in Australia aged five to 14 have a disability. And more than two-thirds of them need help with daily activities, according to a report by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

It is unknown how many children are living with a chronic or terminal illness.

What is known, however, is that parents of a disabled or seriously ill child face stresses and challenges far beyond the already big demands of raising a young family.

Families of a child with disability record higher than average rates of depression and divorce, Children with Disabilities Australia executive officer Stephanie Gotlib says.

"Parents of these children are exhausted and it is not simply because of the demands of living with a child with disability," Gotlib says.

"They are exhausted from the constant need for advocacy and having to constantly fight for their children's basic services and support needs ... there is no clear pathway."

To help parents find support and services for seriously ill or disabled children, here are a few groups that may offer help:

■ Tweddle Child and Family Health Service runs a program called MyTime, a weekly peer support group for parents of children with a disability or a chronic medical illness. Helpful resources from the MyTime website [mytime.net.au](http://mytime.net.au)

See also [tweddle.org.au](http://tweddle.org.au), and Association for Children with a Disability website [acd.org.au](http://acd.org.au)

■ Autism: In Our Own Words is a new website and blog offering support to parents of autistic children. Go to [autismourwords.com.au](http://autismourwords.com.au) or [facebook.com/autismourwords](http://facebook.com/autismourwords)

■ Scope provides support services throughout Victoria to children with disabilities and their families, including respite care programs. Go to [scopevic.org.au](http://scopevic.org.au) for more information or phone 9843 3000.

■ TLC for kids gives children needing emergency admission to hospital or medical treatment a reason to smile. For more details, go to [tlcforkids.org.au](http://tlcforkids.org.au)

■ Young Carers has been set up to support young people who regularly help a family member



who is seriously ill or disabled. There are about 380,000 carers aged under 26. Go to [youngcarers.net.au](http://youngcarers.net.au) or phone 1800 242 636.

■ Yooralla works to support people living with disability and their families. The Victorian-

based organisation helps families with full-time, shared and/or respite care plus other education and residential services. Go to [yooralla.com.au](http://yooralla.com.au) or phone 9831 5600 for more information.

■ Ronald McDonald House Charities Australia helps

seriously ill children and their families, including stays in its Ronald McDonald Houses attached to the Monash Children's and Royal Children's hospitals in Melbourne. Go to [rmhc.org.au](http://rmhc.org.au) or phone 1300 307 642 for details.



## Kid's tale

Carol van Schellen,  
Mickleham

A few years back my five-year-old grandson, Jordan, heard someone call me "Carol" and asked me who Carol was. When I said it was me, he said, "Well, why have I been calling you Oma (grandmother in Dutch) all these years?"

Send your Kid's tales and photos to [yourtime@heraldsun.com.au](mailto:yourtime@heraldsun.com.au)