

Choosing the Right Services

This checklist has been designed to help you gather information to allow you to make good decisions about services for your child or family member.

When looking for information about services you could:

- Ask people you know
- Talk to people you are already working with
- Look on the internet
- Phone services directly
- Talk to people you trust like; your doctor, case manager

Services should:

- Be flexible
- Want to involve you in planning your service
- Be interested in what you think
- Be happy to provide you with clear information about what you want



Red Flags and Alarm Bells

Sometimes there can be signals that should ring alarm bells for you. This doesn't mean the service is not worthwhile. It does mean it would be wise to gather further information before signing up to the program.

These warning signs include:

- Information on the program is general or vague
- The full cost of the program is not spelled out
- There is little evidence to support the program
- There is no timeline for finishing the program
- The qualifications of the person running the program are not clear
- They cannot tell you when the service will finish
- No one you know has heard of them before

Don't be afraid to ask questions when you are looking at different service options.

Listed below are some examples of questions you could ask to help you make good decisions about the services and programs you want.

Questions you could ask about the program or service

- Have you heard about this service before (TV, newspaper, internet, other parents)?
- Do you know anyone who has used this service before? What do they say about it?
- How does the service provider know this program works?
- Can they provide you with evidence or proof that it works?
- Are you included in planning the service?
- Are you involved in the sessions?
- How long does it take?
- What do you have to do before, during or after the sessions?
- Will they work together with other services?
- How long before you can see results?
- Are they working on your goals or theirs?
- Where is the service provided e.g. home, kinder/school or in a clinic

Questions you could ask about the worker

- Is it important to you that the person running the service has a qualification?
- What qualification does the worker have?
- Are they registered?
- What experience does the worker have in this area?
- Do they work alone or with others?

Questions you could ask about protecting your safety

- Do they have a 'Working with Children Check'?
- Do they have a current police check?
- Do they have a privacy policy about protecting your information?

Questions you could ask about costs

- What are the costs?
- What do you get for this?
- Are there any extra charges?
- How will you pay for it?
- Who might be able to help with the cost?
- Are there payment options?
- What happens if you pull out or part way through?
- Are they selling something else?
- Who is funding the program and do they have a vested interest?

Questions to ask yourself

- Would you feel comfortable working with this person?
- Have you been listened to?
- Can this fit this into our family life at the moment?
- Is it the right time to be doing this?
- What is the best thing that could happen from being involved?
- What is the worst thing that could happen from being involved?
- What does your gut tell you?