

Contact

Baptcare Home-Start program

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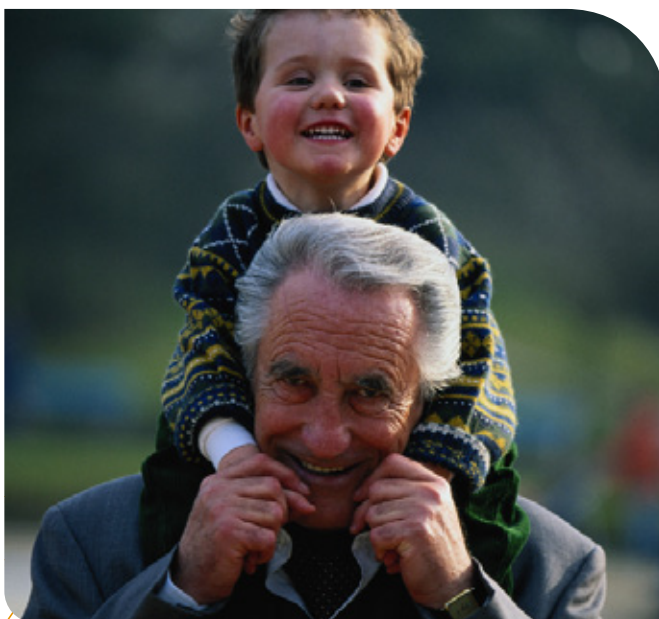
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Baptcare seeks to empower individuals to reach their full potential in all aspects of their life and to strengthen communities so that no one is left isolated, lonely or in need. At Baptcare, we see what could be, not what is.
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What is Home-Start?

Home-Start is an exciting and innovative program that began in Australia in 1989. It is a voluntary home visiting service that offers practical support and friendship to families with children under the age of five.

All Home-Start volunteers offer their time on a voluntary basis; most are parents or grandparents themselves.

Volunteers are linked to families on a one-to-one basis to provide support.

What do Home-Start volunteers do?

A flexible and an imaginative approach is the main feature of Home-Start visits. Volunteers offer:

- Friendship.
- Mentoring and practical support.
- Help with the children.
- Help with attending appointments.
- Reading to the children.
- Having a chat.
- Help with the shopping.

Families are visited once a week for a minimum of two hours. Sometimes visits consist of playing with the children. For other visits, it may be important to help cook a meal or a birthday cake, or go with the family on an outing.

Who can use Home-Start?

Any family with a child under the age of five who may be experiencing difficulties; most commonly parents who are exhausted and lonely. They may be single mums or dads, or parents with new babies and toddlers. Each family will have a different situation. Some families will already be receiving assistance from other helping agencies. Home-Start volunteers can also assist by giving low key support and friendship on a short or long term basis.

Who can be a Home-Start volunteer?

Volunteers are mostly parents or grandparents and come from a variety of backgrounds and ages. They are selected for their caring attitudes and ability to relate to each other.

All volunteers must attend an eight week (4.5 hours per week) preparation course and undergo a screening process before being matched with a family.

What support is offered to Home-Start volunteers?

Support is offered to all Home-Start volunteers by means of:

- Training.
- Individual supervision.
- Group supervision/ongoing training.
- Meetings with other volunteers.
- Picnics and outings.

How do families contact Home-Start?

Families themselves can ask Home-Start for help. Workers in various agencies may introduce families seeking help to Home-Start. Other referrals come from Maternal & Child Health Nurses, schools, churches, doctors or neighbourhood centres.

Where does Home-Start operate?

Home-Start is a free service available to families with at least one child aged under five who live in the LGA of Brimbank. Home-Start is also offered to families with preschool aged children living in the Greater City of Bendigo.

What happens when a family is referred?

The Home-Start coordinator makes an initial visit to the family to assess their needs and to discuss the Home-Start Program.

If Home-Start can be of assistance, the coordinator will introduce a volunteer to the family. It is up to the volunteer, family and the coordinator to determine when the visits happen and how long they continue. The coordinator maintains close links with both the family and volunteer to ensure the arrangements are working out.

Who runs the Home-Start program?

Baptcare employs a full time coordinator to run the Home-Start program. Home-Start National Inc. provides the program with training, information and guidance.

