

Oncology Social Work

12-week checklist for parents and carers

About 12 weeks ago, you and your child were first introduced to the Oncology Services Group at the Queensland Children's Hospital. While we understand you have been on a roller-coaster ride of emotions and adjustment, we hope you have now reached a stage where you are starting to adjust to the demands of caring for your child as they undergo treatment along with all of life's other commitments. This is no easy feat and we encourage you to take things one day at a time.

By now you will have met a social worker, who has supported you and your family through the initial shock of your child's diagnosis and the weeks that followed. Now that you have reached the 12-week milestone, we hope you are feeling more confident as you navigate the health system, and better prepared to manage the day-to-day stress of your child's treatment. From now on, your social worker will take a bit of a step back, but will always be available if you need them.

The first 12 weeks

The following is a list of tasks that your social worker may have helped you to complete throughout the past 12 weeks. By now, you should have:

- Applied for Centrelink payments – Carers Allowance / Payment / Carers Adjustment Payment.
- Checked with the Oncology Welfare team about your eligibility for:
 - concessional parking at the hospital
 - financial assistance through charities, such as Redkite (www.redkite.org.au), Brain Child (www.brainchild.org.au), Leukaemia Foundation (www.leukaemia.org.au), and Kids with Cancer (www.kidswithcancer.org.au).
- Registered with Camp Quality (www.campquality.org.au) / Canteen (www.canteen.org.au) / Redkite.
- received a Redkite Bag from your social worker (for cancer diagnosis only).

Things to consider

- Your child will be eligible to have a wish granted by Make-A-Wish (www.makeawish.org.au) or Starlight Children's Foundation (<https://starlight.org.au>). You can apply online. We can follow-up on our end when the application is then sent to your consultant for details about your child's illness.

- Redkite and Ronald McDonald House Charities (www.rmhc.org.au) provide tutoring grants for patients and siblings. Contact the Welfare team to discuss further.
- The Redkite Parent Connect group runs every second Wednesday at the hospital (in Ward 11b parents' room) from 10:30am-11:30am. All are welcome.
- The Social Work team, together with the Allied Health team, coordinate a number of group programs throughout the year including: Siblings Day; Look Good, Feel Better; Adolescent Day; and End-of-Treatment Day. If you are interested in any of these programs, register with the Social Work Department.
- The Social Work team runs a fortnightly family therapy clinic. All oncology families are eligible to attend and can self-refer by contacting the Social Work Department.
- It is important to continue to look after yourself as your child's carer. If you are finding the adjustment challenging, we encourage you to access support in the community through your local general practitioner (GP). Your GP will be able to refer you for a 'mental health care plan' if you feel you would benefit from seeing a psychologist in the community. Alternatively, Redkite provides both face-to-face and telephone counselling services to family members of children who have had a cancer diagnosis.
- Our oncology social work allied health assistant is located in Outpatients 6f (Level 6) and will continue to be available to provide support letters throughout your child's treatment: this includes letters for Centrelink, your employer, immigration, child care etc.
- Contact the welfare team if you would like to access financial support, assistance with patient travel (PTSS or IPTASS) or education grants.

Contact us

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