



# Caring for Carers of Children and Young people with Neurodiversity

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# Caring for Carers of Children and Young people with Neurodiversity

Embracing Ministries has put together a list of potential ways that you can help the carers in your congregation feel safe and welcomed. This is a work in progress and new ideas and thoughts are always welcome.

Not all these suggestions will be right for every carer. The best way to find out is by having a personal conversation with the person about their needs and what would work for them.

Remember carers come in all shapes and sizes, including the siblings.

**1 John 3:18 says: Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.**

What a great privilege it is to be able to love one another.

# Carer Support Suggestions

## **Practical Support**

- Suggest respite opportunities (e.g., “Parents’ Night Off”, supervised play afternoons)
- Provide help with transport when possible - especially for siblings
- Offer flexible service times or online options
- Create predictable, low-demand church events that carers can attend without stress
- Provide clear, advance communication about changes to routines or events

## **A small note about meal trains**

- Offer meal trains during high-stress periods - whilst acknowledging there may be restricted food preferences
- If specific brands are requested, please follow that request. It may cause a safe food to be rejected if not what the child thought it was.
- Ask for specific recipes that the family might like, and make it to those specifications

# Carer Support Suggestions

## Emotional & Pastoral Support

- Offer regular pastoral check-ins that are gentle, optional, and non-intrusive
- Provide a safe space for carers to share without judgement
- Ensure pastoral staff are trained in carer trauma-informed and ND-affirming care
- Acknowledge the carer's expertise about their child
- Celebrate the strengths and resilience of carers
- Avoid spiritualising burnout (“God won't give you more than you can handle”)

## Community & Connection

- Facilitate peer-support groups for carers
- Connect carers with other families who “get it”
- Host low-sensory family gatherings where carers can relax
- Ensure carers feel welcomed even if their child cannot attend
- Invite carers into leadership or advisory roles if they desire it
- Offer groups online for carers to be able to access while not needing to leave the home

## Spiritual Support

- Provide accessible spiritual resources (audio, visual, short-form, reflective)
- Offer quiet prayer spaces specifically for carers
- Create spiritual retreats designed with sensory and emotional safety in mind
- Ensure sermons and teaching acknowledge diverse family experiences
- Encourage carers to engage in spiritual practices that fit their capacity, not expectations

# Carer Support Suggestions

## **Communication & Understanding**

- Ask carers what support they want, not what the church assumes they need
- Provide updates about their child's experience in programs (brief, positive, respectful)
- Avoid blaming or shaming language about behaviour
- Respect privacy and confidentiality
- Ensure all volunteers understand the importance of carer dignity

## **Supporting the Carer Load**

- Provide buddies for children so carers can attend worship
- Offer “drop-off” options where appropriate and safe
- Create clear, simple processes for program registration
- Ensure church spaces are easy to navigate
- Minimise paperwork and administrative burden

## **Advocacy & Empowerment**

- Encourage carers to share their insights with church leadership
- Include carers in shaping inclusion policies
- Advocate for ND-affirming practices across the parish
- Celebrate stories of inclusion and belonging
- Ensure carers know they are valued members of the Body of Christ