

Where do I start?

If you already access any kind of child and family service you can ask the person you are currently dealing with to be your Lead Practitioner and to organise a Meitheal. If you are interested in finding out more about Meitheal and you do not currently know anyone who can be your Lead Practitioner you should contact your local Child and Family Support Network Coordinator who details are given below.

Where do I start?

The Child and Family Support Network Coordinator for the area is:

Name: _____

You can contact them at:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Email: _____

General Information on support services in your area can be got from:

Web address: _____

NOTE

If a concern arises that a child or children are being abused or neglected, a referral must be made to the Social Work Service in line with *Children First Guidance*. Information made available during the Meitheal process may be shared with the Social Work service.

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Child and Family Agency

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Meitheal

A TÚSLA led national practice model

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



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DOES YOUR FAMILY NEED SOME SUPPORT?

What is Meitheal?

This is an information leaflet for parents about a new national support model led by Tusla – Child and Family Agency, called Meitheal, which can help you and your child to get the supports you need, easily, locally and when you need it.

The old adage says it takes a village to raise a child. Tusla knows this is still true today, so it came up with a model for local services, community groups and professionals to work together with parents to give children and young people the best possible start. The model is called 'Meitheal' after the old Irish term that describes how neighbours come together to help harvest crops or other tasks.

The kinds of services that might be involved in Meitheal are schools, youth services, family resource centres, medical services and others like these.

Why would my family need Meitheal?

Preventing problems from arising or getting worse is better than dealing with them later. Meitheal can help stop current challenges from getting any worse for your child.

If you feel that your child has additional needs, or is facing challenges that are difficult to overcome, and you are finding it hard to access the support necessary to help them, Meitheal may be able to help you.

Examples of the challenges that Meitheal could help with are:

- **problems at school;**
- **a child feeling down;**
- **not getting on with your child;**
- **family problems;**
- **coping with illness or bereavement;**
- **difficult behaviour.**

You may already be receiving support from different services but you are finding it difficult to deal with all of them at once. Meitheal can help you to get the support that is best for your child, in a coordinated manner.

How Meitheal works

The first step is for a supportive person from one of the child and family services in your local area, called a Lead Practitioner, to sit down with you and your child to identify your child's needs and strengths. You may need one particular service or you may need a group of services to come together to provide you with the support you need to improve your family's wellbeing. The Lead Practitioner works with you and your child to put in place a plan and can arrange the services for you. You and your child participate in putting that plan into action, in reviewing it and in deciding when you feel your child's needs have been met.

You may also decide that Meitheal isn't right for you and your family right now. You can always come back for help in the future.

