STRENGTHENING PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

POLICY AND FUNDING GUIDELINES

Melbourne Jul-17

Authorised by the Department of Education and Training,

2 Treasury Place, East Melbourne, Victoria, 3002

CONTENTS

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The Strengthening Parent Support Program (SPSP) is funded by the Department of Education and Training (the Department) and is for parents and carers of children from birth to 18 years who have a disability or developmental delay. The program employs a Coordinator to establish peer support groups and provide individual support and information to parents and carers to support them in their parenting role.

This parenting support program provides families with opportunities to participate in peer support groups and to establish support networks with other families or carers in their local community. The program also provides families with access to information about evidence-based services to assist them in their parenting role.

The Strengthening Parent Support Program Policy and Funding Guidelines (the Guidelines) support the delivery and administration of the program.

The Guidelines outline the Department’s expectations for service providers funded to deliver the SPSP and should be read in conjunction with the Department’s service agreement which outlines funding, mutual responsibilities and requirements.

These Guidelines provide:

- program specifications
- the performance and accountability framework
- other information relevant to the delivery of the SPSP.

These Guidelines apply from 1 January 2017.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

VICTORIA THE EDUCATION STATE

The Victorian Government is committed to supporting all parents with the knowledge and skills to help their children thrive, from birth onwards.

In 2014, the Andrew's Labor Government committed to making Victoria the Education State. Victoria aims to be a global centre of excellence in learning and development and to ensure all Victorians, regardless of their starting point or postcode, have the skills, knowledge and attributes they need to shape their future in a changing world.

In the Education State, Victorians value education, for themselves and those around them, at all stages of life and recognise that some stages of learning have a more significant impact on life outcomes. This starts with a focus on the early years to ensure all children get the best start in life, with access to safe, quality early childhood services, and support to learn, play and grow. A key focus of reform is creating a more flexible and integrated service system to ensure children and families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage are supported to succeed.

The Victorian Government is committed to providing more support for parents, particularly those experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage. This is a key reform direction outlined in the Education State Early Childhood Consultation Paper and the Roadmap for Reform: Strong Families, Safe Children.

As part of the Government's commitment to make Victoria the Education State, community-wide consultations were undertaken in 2015 regarding early childhood services. Feedback from these consultations confirmed the importance of supporting parents and providing earlier and more intensive support for those who need it most.

The SPSP is consistent with the findings of these consultations in that it supports parents to develop the skills to enhance their children's learning from birth.

The SPSP supports parents throughout their child's development – from birth to 18 years – recognising that parents will engage with a number of health and education services during this time.

EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE STRENGTHENING PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAM

A child's learning and development is greatly impacted by the environment that they grow up in. Research shows that during early childhood, the foundations of social, emotional, mental and physical health and wellbeing are established with executive functioning and self-regulation largely developed before the age of five.

The type of parenting that children receive is crucial to developing strong foundations in these areas. For the majority of children, a loving home environment in the care of parents who are attuned to their needs and provide support, stimulation and encouragement sets them on a good developmental pathway. Parents can benefit from high-quality parenting supports in the early years.

The daily care-giving activities and responsibilities of parents or carers of children with a disability or developmental delay may be time consuming and often physically and emotionally demanding (Sartore et al. 2013). The demands on the parent's/carer's time and energy can reduce the resources available for other meaningful and health-protective activities (Sartore et al. 2013).

While most parents have greater need for support at different times during their child's life, parents and carers of children with a disability may experience additional challenges and stressors (Davis et al. 2013). Stressors may include lack of access to specialist services and increased physical or emotional demands arising from their child's health or behaviour (Davis et al. 2013). In addition, families with a child with a disability may be at increased risk of isolation from formal and informal social support mechanisms (Sartore et al. 2013).

The wellbeing of parents and carers is inextricably linked to the wellbeing of the children for whom they care (Schor 2003). Furthermore, the social and emotional wellbeing of parents of children with a disability or developmental delay is well recognised as being important to the parent, the child and the whole family particularly as it can affect their capacity to provide quality care (Davis et al. 2013). Parents of children with a disability often show poor results on markers of psychosocial wellbeing and show elevated levels of psychological distress (Sartore et al. 2013). Parents' wellbeing is also a risk factor for a number of poor outcomes in the child (Davis et al. 2013). The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC) also found that parents who lack social support are more likely to experience psychological distress (Zubrick, et al., 2008).

Peer support can be an important source of emotional and social support to parents and carers of children with a disability or developmental delay. This support can take a number of forms including peer support groups, one-on-one support or community based parent networks that may be delivered in person or using technology (Orima Research 2013).

The benefits of parent-to-parent connections are well documented (Ireys et al. 2001; Law et al. 2002; Henderson et al. 2014; Sartore et al. 2013) and include: gains in coping skills; gains in acceptance of family and disability; decreases in feelings of isolation; improved physical and psychological health in parents; acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills; and progress in getting help to meet their stated needs (Orima Research 2013). Parent-to-parent support groups also provide parents with an outlet for discussing their feelings and fears (Foreman, Willis & Goodenough 2005; Kingsnorth et al. 2011; Sartore et al. 2013).

In addition, parent-to-parent support groups are generally seen as a positive and preferred information resource for families of children with a disability (Konrad 2007; Sartore et al. 2013; Shilling et al. 2013).

Appropriate processes and organisational factors are important for the success of peer support groups. Research has shown the potential for negative outcomes when parent and volunteer led peer support groups do not have training and supervision of those offering support; a dedicated service coordinator; clear rules and boundaries for the group; and confidentiality agreements (Shilling et al. 2015).

SERVICE DELIVERY CONTEXT

Services for families are funded and/or provided by all levels of government — federal, state and local — and are also delivered by a range of non-government organisations, including community-based not-for-profit, as well as private for-profit organisations.

While some services are available to all families (universal), others are provided specifically for families experiencing particular difficulties or whose children are underachieving or at risk of poor developmental outcomes (targeted). There are also highly targeted services for families whose children are at risk of abuse or neglect.

The SPSP is a targeted service for parents and carers of children with a disability or developmental delay and is located within a system of services that supports parents and carers. This section provides a brief overview of key services available for families of children with a disability or developmental delay. Families participating in SPSP activities will be engaging with many of these services as their child grows and develops.

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT SERVICES FOR FAMILIES

The Victorian Government invests in a range of services to support families. These services are delivered by Victorian Government departments and also through partnerships including with local government and community service organisations.

Support services for families include education and care, health promotion and healthcare, and parenting education and advice, through to targeted services for families experiencing more significant issues.

Parenting support services

Parenting support services for families with children aged from birth to 18 years seek to improve parent's competence and confidence. Parenting education, support and referral is provided by a range of services including those outlined below.

Parentline is a statewide telephone counselling service providing information, advice, referrals and counselling for parents and carers of children from birth to 18 years.

Regional Parenting Services operate across the State and offer consultation, linkages, resources and professional development to professionals who work with families, as well as information and education for parents.

Early Parenting Centres provide services and support to assist parents experiencing acute early parenting difficulties by increasing parents' knowledge, skills and confidence through the provision of consultation, counselling, skill development and education services.

Supported Playgroups are provided for families experiencing disadvantage to improve the learning, development and wellbeing outcomes of children from birth until they start primary school. Parents also learn about local services and develop social support networks. Supported Playgroups are led by qualified facilitators who deliver *smalltalk*, an evidence-based intervention.

Signposts for Building Better Behaviour is a targeted program designed to help parents to manage the behaviour of children aged 3 to 16 years who have a developmental delay or intellectual disability.

Association for Children with a Disability

The Association for Children with a Disability (ACD) is a statewide advocacy and information service for families of children with a disability living in Victoria. ACD receives funding from the Victorian Government to provide support and disseminate information to families, contribute to the Department's policy directions and facilitate professional development for the SPSP Coordinators (see Support for Service Providers on page 16).

VICTORIAN EARLY YEARS SERVICES AND SCHOOLS

Victorian early years services and schools work in partnership with each other and families to support children's learning and development. This includes supporting children and their families as they transition from kindergarten to primary school and from primary to secondary school.

For all professionals working with children aged 0 to 8 years and their families, the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) provides evidence-based practice guidance about the best ways to support children's learning and development. The VEYLDF promotes establishing partnerships with families, where information sharing supports families' confidence, identifies what families do well, and recognises the family's critical importance in their child's life. Strong partnerships between families and professionals are particularly important during transitions, including the transition to primary school.

An overview of these education settings and the support available for families of children with a disability or developmental delay is outlined below. For some of these, the support is targeted towards the child, not the parents or carers.

Early years services

Early years services for children and families include programs supporting children's health, development and learning, such as early childhood education and care services, kindergarten and the Maternal and Child Health Service.

The **Maternal and Child Health** (MCH) Service is provided through a partnership between the Victorian Government and local government. It is a free service available to all families with young children. The MCH service offers support, education and advice in more than 640,000 consultations with families every year. First-time parent groups are also offered to all new parents. These groups provide families with an opportunity to meet other families and provide information to new parents about how to care for their babies and promote their health and development.

The service also includes the MCH Line, a statewide telephone service available for Victorian families with children from birth to school age. MCH nurses can provide information, support and guidance regarding a range of issues including child health, nutrition, breastfeeding, maternal and family health, and parenting.

In addition to the suite of services offered through the universal MCH service, the Enhanced MCH service provides a more intensive level of support for children and families at risk of poor outcomes, in particular where there are multiple risk factors.

There are also a range of more intensive early years services, some of which are specifically for children with a disability or developmental delay and their families.

Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) support children with a disability or developmental delay from birth to school entry and their families. Services provided to children and families include information and support, planning and service coordination, and individual and group therapy and education. The overall aim of these services is to provide parents and families with the knowledge, skills and support to meet the needs of their child and to optimise the child's development and ability to participate in family and community life. ECIS uses a family-centred approach, recognising the importance of working in partnership with the family. ECIS Intake teams in each region of Victoria provide a centralised entry point to ECIS. Access to ECIS supports will gradually transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme from 2016 to 2019.

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages are available to build the capacity of funded kindergartens to support the access and participation of children with a disability and high support needs. The program recognises the importance of kindergartens working in partnership with families to support each child's learning and development.

Schools

The Department provides a range of policies, programs and resources for Victorian schools to support the delivery of high quality schooling for all students, including students with a disability or developmental delay. There are a range of options to help students access quality education that meets their learning and development needs, including specialist schools and support programs. School leaders and teachers work in a cooperative partnership with parents to support their child's development.

NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will support Australians with disability, their families and carers. The NDIS assists people with disability to:

- access mainstream services and supports
- access community services and supports
- maintain informal support arrangements
- receive reasonable and necessary funded supports.

In addition to providing support to the individual with the disability, the NDIS offers care-related support for families. The SPSP focuses more on supporting those families through parenting skills and support, and strengthening family relationships. From 2016 to 2019, the area where a family resides will inform how they access supports from the NDIS or other services.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is responsible for implementing the NDIS.

Information, Linkages and Capacity Building

Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) is the component of the NDIS that provides information, linkages and referrals to connect people with disability, their families and carers with appropriate disability, community and mainstream supports. A second aim of ILC is to partner with local communities, and mainstream and universal services to improve access and inclusion for people with disability.

ILC refers carers and families to a range of support options that help them sustain their caring role, including the SPSP. These options include:

- linking carers and families to social and recreational activities that provide carers with a break from their caring role and connect them with the community
- providing information on activities that promote carer wellbeing such as personal development, peer support and mentoring
- linking carers into direct carer support services.

Local Area Coordination

Local Area Coordination (LAC) is an important part of the supports and activities that will be available to people with disability and their communities as they transition to the NDIS. It is the development of relationships between the NDIS, people with disability, their families and carers, and the local community (including informal networks, community groups, disability and mainstream services). The LAC role connects across each of the five activity streams of ILC to support people with disability to explore and build an ordinary life within their communities.

LACs will work with NDIS participants to:

- provide assistance to connect to and build informal and natural supports
- provide assistance with the planning process and effective implementation
- work with non-participants as part of ILC
- work with community, providers and mainstream to build inclusion and awareness of the needs of people with disability.

For more information, see: NDIS in Victoria

COMMONWEALTH-FUNDED SUPPORTS FOR FAMILIES

National Carer Gateway

The Commonwealth Government is developing an Integrated Plan for Carer Support Services. One of the elements of this plan is the National Carer Gateway. The National Carer Gateway provides a central place for carers to go for information, support and referral to services and will be the ‘front door’ for all existing services.

The Gateway includes a national telephone contact centre, a website with carer-specific information and a service finder to make it easier for carers to find information and support. The Gateway is a general resource for all carers including information for parents/carers of children with a disability or developmental delay.

For more information, see: National Carer Gateway

Community playgroups

The Commonwealth Government, through Playgroup Australia, funds Playgroup Victoria to support the delivery of community playgroups for all families with young children across Victoria.

Community playgroups are regular gatherings of parents and caregivers with their under-school age children. Parents manage and lead community playgroups and organise play and social activities for the playgroup. Community playgroups provide opportunities for children to engage in play activities with their parents and other children. They also provide opportunities for parents to meet other parents to form friendships and for mutual support and advice. Parents also learn from other parents about services in their local area.

MyTime Peer Support Groups

MyTime Peer Support Groups provide facilitated peer support to families raising children up to 16 years with a disability, developmental delay or chronic medical condition. The groups aim to increase parents and carers’ knowledge of caring for a child with disability or chronic medical condition as well as allowing them to interact and form relationships with other parents and carers with experiences.

MyTime Peer Support Groups are supported by up to two workers – a facilitator for parents and a play helper for children below school age. Facilitators work with participants to help them get to know each other and to provide information about services, supports and resources in their local area. Play helpers are engaged where a MyTime group has parents/carers of children under school age. They organise play activities and provide support for the children while the parents participate in activities and discussions.

MyTime Peer Support Groups are provided in the community by local organisations. The program is funded by the Commonwealth Government and is coordinated nationally by the Parenting Research Centre.

Raising Children Network

The Raising Children Network website is funded by the Commonwealth Government and is a partnership comprising the Parenting Research Centre, the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute and the Royal Children’s Hospital Centre for Community Child Health. The website provides information to help parents with the day-to-day decisions of raising children and to help them look after their own needs. This includes information relevant to children with a disability or developmental delay including family relationships and communication, health, services and support, and play and learning.

For more information, see: Raising Children Network

SPECIFICATIONS

SERVICE SPECIFICATIONS

Outcomes

The primary outcome of the SPSP is that parents and carers of children with a disability or developmental delay are supported to provide high quality care to their children that supports their learning and development.

Other outcomes of the SPSP are that parents and carers feel more supported in their parenting role and they have increased access to information about evidence-based services and supports that can assist them.

Funding

The SPSP funding model is based on service providers delivering a professional service in accordance with these Guidelines.

The model specifies the employment of a professionally qualified, experienced and skilled Coordinator to deliver the program. Eighty per cent (80%) of the funding is for the salary and salary-related costs (long service leave/WorkCover/personal leave) of employing the Coordinator. The balance of the funding (20%) is for the administration of the program. This includes program management and professional supervision of the Coordinator, and capital inputs into the program such as office equipment, venue hire, and technology to support service.

Continuation of funding is based on service providers meeting the targets specified in these Guidelines. In addition to regular performance monitoring meetings with Departmental regional staff, the performance of all service providers funded by the Department through service agreements is formally reviewed at the end of the financial year.

It is expected that service providers will meet targets. In situations where targets are not met, the Department and the service provider will work together to identify the causes and implement remedial action. Failure to meet targets may lead to a reduction or cessation of funding in accordance with the terms of the service agreement.

If there is any unexpended funding at the end of the financial year it must be returned to the Department within ninety days of the new financial year or as otherwise agreed.

Target group

The SPSP is funded by the Department for parents and carers who have a child aged 0 to 18 years with a disability or developmental delay. The SPSP is intended to be an inclusive program so a child does not need to be formally diagnosed with a disability or developmental delay for their parent or carer to participate. Coordinators are encouraged to use their own professional judgement about families’ participation in the SPSP.

Parents and carers may continue to be involved in the SPSP once their child is over 18 years. Their knowledge and experience may be a valuable insight to other participants.

From here on, the term ‘parent’ refers to both parents and carers.

Program activities

The SPSP is responsive to the needs of parents and the level of support provided should reflect this. The SPSP provides:

- peer support groups
- education/information sessions
- individual support.

Coordinators may also have one-off contacts with parents. This may include phone calls and face-to-face conversations that are short in nature and involve only one occurrence. These contacts tend to be limited to the provision of information.

Details of Coordinators and program activities are to be provided to the Department at the end of each quarter using Form A - Quarterly Overview form (Appendix 1).

Peer support groups

Peer support groups are a core component of the SPSP. Planning the delivery of peer support groups should reflect local priorities and the needs of families. Coordinators should plan the location of peer support groups in collaboration with the Department’s regional offices.

Peer support groups may be delivered in person or online where a parent’s geographical location or individual circumstances make it difficult to attend in person. Peer support groups should be facilitated by the Coordinator or a parent.

Coordinators will retain responsibility for monitoring parent-led groups including collecting data for reporting purposes. Coordinators are expected to work closely with parent leaders and provide appropriate support and advice.

Examples of peer support groups:

These examples are not intended to represent all possible peer support groups. The SPSP is intended to be flexible to meet the requirements of the local context.

Example 1: in person – Coordinator-led

The Coordinator hosts bimonthly meetings in person with parents with children with a disability or developmental delay.

Example 2: in person meeting – parent-led

5 parents with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder meet in person every fortnight at a community centre. One of the parents facilitates the meetings.

Example 3: online meeting – Coordinator-led

The Coordinator hosts a bimonthly meeting online via Skype for parents with children with a disability or developmental delay.

Individual support

Individual support is a one to one meeting(s) between a Coordinator and parents.

Education/information session

An education/information session is a one off meeting for a specific purpose (whether in person or online).

Role of SPSP Coordinators

The Coordinator’s role is to establish, facilitate and maintain peer support groups for parents with children with a disability or developmental delay.

Coordinators also provide individual support to parents and assist them to locate and access services. They may also deliver education/information sessions for parents.

Coordinators must have the skills to:

- encourage, engage and support the participation of parents in peer support groups and other SPSP activities including informal parent networks
- facilitate and moderate discussions across peer support groups including online forums
- provide administrative support for peer support groups and meetings (in person and online)
- provide guidance and advice to parent leaders of peer support groups on how to facilitate groups in a safe, inclusive and respectful manner and manage group dynamics
- share evidence-based information and resources with parent leaders of peer support groups and parents engaged with the SPSP e.g. newsletters (hardcopy or electronic)
- develop and maintain information on disability support services relevant to the regional service area, in collaboration with the Department’s regional offices
- build the capacity of parents to develop skills to navigate the disability support system
- provide support or referrals to encourage families to self-advocate for their child.

Active involvement by the Coordinator in all aspects of peer support groups and activities increases the likelihood that the SPSP continues to meet the needs of parents.

Qualified and skilled Coordinators

Coordinators employed after 1 January 2017 are required to hold (or in arrangements agreed with the Department, be working towards) relevant qualifications and have the skills to:

- develop referral pathways for families into the SPSP
- engage and support the participation of families in the SPSP
- assist families to access relevant community supports by developing service plans with them
- provide support to families consistent with the VEYLDF and the Victorian child safe standards.

The qualification requirements and competencies of Coordinators and a sample Position Description is at Appendices 2A and 2B.

It is a funding requirement that Coordinators are provided with regular performance development from a suitably qualified and experienced supervisor e.g. their manager or equivalent within their organisation.

Participation – Family Record and Family Service Plan

Coordinators must establish clear referral pathways for families to participate in the program.

For all parents attending a peer support group or receiving individual support from the Coordinator, a Family Record (Appendix 1 Form E) must be completed. The purpose of the Family Record is to collect information about the family to support their participation in the SPSP and also for service accountability and performance monitoring.

Coordinators are encouraged to also develop a Family Service Plan (Appendix 1 Form F) for all parents engaged with the SPSP. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that parents are supported to access services that will assist them during or following their participation in the SPSP. The Family Service Plan is a ‘living document’ developed and refined with the active involvement and agreement of the parent(s) throughout their participation in the SPSP. Coordinators are encouraged to review the Family Service Plan with parent(s) annually or more often if required, and to provide a copy to the family.

A Family Record or Family Service Plan does not need to be completed for parents whose only participation in the SPSP is attending an education/information session.

Parent Satisfaction Survey

A Parent Satisfaction Survey (Appendix 1 Form H) will be used to assess whether parents who participated in peer support groups or received individual support from the Coordinator were satisfied with the program during the financial year. All parents who fit this description irrespective of how long they participated in the program should be asked to complete the survey, where appropriate.

The survey should be provided to parents when the Coordinator considers appropriate during the financial year. In order to increase the number of parents who complete the survey and for the ease of data collection, it is recommended that the Coordinator sends the survey electronically via email to parents. For example, the survey could be set up in Survey Monkey.

The survey is voluntary and parents can choose to remain anonymous. All survey responses should be kept confidential.

PERFORMANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

As specified in these Guidelines, service providers are required to:

- deliver peer support groups and other activities in accordance with the service specifications
- meet performance targets
- report on activities to the Department.

PERFORMANCE TARGETS

The following performance targets apply to each full-time equivalent (FTE) Coordinator employed by a service provider to deliver the SPSP. Targets are reduced proportionately with the time fraction worked by the Coordinator. For example, a Coordinator employed two days per week would be required to lead a minimum of two peer support groups and support two parent-led peer support groups each quarter.

Quantitative targets

Performance Indicator	Target for each FTE	Source of information
Number of SPSP peer support groups operating during the quarter	10 peer support groups each quarter per FTE (reduced in accordance with FTE fraction) At a minimum 5 of the peer support groups should be facilitated by the Coordinator, with the remaining groups led by parents and supported by the Coordinator	Form G – Participant Record for Peer Support Groups Reported in Form A – Quarterly Overview each quarter

The following Performance Indicators do not have targets per FTE but service providers are expected to report on these (see Reporting on page 16).

Performance Indicator	Source of information
Total number of parents who attended SPSP peer support groups each quarter	Form E – Family Record
Number of parents new to SPSP in a quarter who attended a SPSP peer support group each quarter	Form E – Family Record
Number of education/information sessions that were held each quarter	Form H – Participant Record for Peer Support Groups
Number of parents attending education/information sessions that were held each quarter	Form G – Attendance Record for Strengthening Parent Support Program Education/Information session
Number of one-off contacts with parents each quarter	Must be recorded in Form A – Quarterly Overview
Number of parents that received individual support from the Coordinator each quarter	Form E – Family Record

Qualitative targets

Performance Indicator	Target	Source of information
% of parents satisfied with the program at the end of the year	85%	Form I – Parent Satisfaction Survey Reported in Form B – Parent Satisfaction Summary at the end of Quarter 4.

REPORTING

Service providers are responsible for collecting information about the operation of the SPSP. The purpose of collecting this information is to acquire basic information about the parents participating in the SPSP and assess the impact of participation.

The reporting forms are listed below. Examples of the forms and a Forms Completion Protocol are provided in Appendix 1.

Form A: Quarterly Overview

Form B: Parent Satisfaction Summary

Form C: Referral IN

Form D: Referral OUT

Form E: Family Record

Form F: Family Service Plan

Form G: Attendance Record for Strengthening Parent Support Program Education/Information Session

Form H: Participant Record for Peer Support Groups

Form I: Parent Satisfaction Survey

Information will be collated and analysed by the Department to determine whether quantitative and qualitative performance targets are being met. Service providers are required to ensure that all information is provided to the Department within two weeks of the end of each quarter.

SUPPORT FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS

Service providers and Coordinators are supported by the Department's regional offices and the Association for Children with a Disability.

Department's regional offices

Regional offices are the first point of contact for service providers funded to deliver the SPSP. Regional staff provide assistance and advice regarding service delivery, for example, in determining the location of peer support groups. Regional staff also manage funded providers' service agreements and monitor service delivery against performance measures and targets specified in these Guidelines. Monitoring is undertaken through discussion with service providers and analysis of performance and financial data (as specified in the service agreement and in these Guidelines).

The Department's central office oversees the design and implementation of the SPSP and works in partnership with regional offices to provide advice and guidance on the requirements of the program to service providers.

Association for Children with a Disability

The Association for Children with a Disability (ACD) provides a range of supports for the SPSP. These include:

- facilitating the network of Coordinators and arranging regular meetings
- overseeing the professional development of Coordinators
- promoting evidence-based parenting programs and strategies
- provision of core competency training to Coordinators
- referring parents to relevant peer support programs.

Coordinators should be supported by their employers to regularly attend the network meetings and professional development events held by ACD.

REFERENCES

Davis, E., Gilson, K.M., Corr, L., Stevenson, S., Williams, K., Reddihough, D., Waters, E., Herrmann, H. & Fisher, J. 2013. 'Enhancing support for the mental health of parents and carers of children with disability', Practical Design Fund, viewed 11 December 2015 <www.ndis.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Final%20Report_Uni%20Melb_PDF%20project.pdf>.

Foreman, T., Willis, L. & Goodenough, B. 2005. 'Hospital-based support groups for parents of seriously unwell children: An example from pediatric oncology in Australia', Social Work with Groups, vol.28, no.2, pp.3-21.

Henderson, R.J., Johnson, A. & Moodie, S. 2014. 'Parent-to-parent support for parents with children who are deaf or hard of hearing: A conceptual framework', American Journal of Audiology, vol.23, no.4, pp.437-448.

Ireys, H.T., Chernoff, R.K.E., DeVet, K.A. & Silver, E.J. 2001. 'Outcomes of community-based family-to-family support: Lessons learned from a decade of randomized trials', Children's Services: Social Policy, Research & Practice, vol.4, no.4, pp.203-216.

King, G., Stewart, D., King, S. & Law, M., 2000. 'Organizational characteristics and issues affecting the longevity of self-help groups for parents of children with special needs', Qualitative Health Research, vol.10, no.2, pp.225-241.

Kingsnorth, S., Gall, C., Beayni, S., & Rigby, P. 2011. ′Parents as transition experts? Qualitative findings from a pilot parent-led peer support group′, Child: care, health and development, vol.37, no.6, pp.833-840.

Konrad, S.C. 2007. 'What parents of seriously ill children value: parent-to-parent connection and mentorship', Journal of Death and Dying, vol.55, no.2, pp.117-130.

Law, M., King, S., Steward, D. & King, G. 2002. 'The perceived effects of parent-led support groups for parents of children with disabilities', Physical & Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics, vol.23, no.2-3, pp.29-48.

Orima Research. 2013. 'Evaluation of the MyTime Peer Support Groups for Parents of Children with a Disability or Chronic Medical Condition', Report for Department of Families, Housing, Community, Services and Indigenous Affairs, viewed 23 December 2015 <www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/08_2013/mytime_evaluation.pdf>.

Sartore, G., Lagioia, V., & Mildon, R. 2013. 'Peer support interventions for parents and carers of children with complex needs', The Cochrane Library, Issue 6.

Schor, E.L. 2003. 'Family pediatrics: report of the Task Force on the Family', Pediatrics, vol.111, no.6, pp.1541-1571.

Shilling, V., Morris, C., Thompson-Coon, J., Ukoumunne, O, Rogers, M. & Logan, S. 2013. 'Peer support for parents of children with chronic disabling conditions: a systematic review of quantitative and qualitative studies', Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology, vol.55, no.7, pp.602-609.

Shilling, V., Bailey, S., Logan, S., & Morris, C. 2015, 'Peer support for parents of disabled children part 2: How organizational and process factors influenced shared experience in a one-to-one service, a qualitative study', Child: care, health and development, vol.41, pp.537–546.

Zubrick, S.R., Smith, G.J., Nicholson, J.M., Sanson, A.V., Jackiewicz, T.A. and the LSAC Research Consortium. 2008.. 'Parenting and families in Australia', Canberra: Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, Social Policy Research Paper No 34.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: FORMS AND PROTOCOL FOR COMPLETION

Strengthening Parent Support Program – protocol for completing forms

Form A: Quarterly Overview

Purpose: Service delivery and performance monitoring

Requirement: Mandatory. Form should not be altered.

Records SPSP activities delivered each quarter, the name and qualifications of the SPSP Coordinator(s) and the demographics of participants.

1. Commenced by Coordinator at the beginning of each quarter.
2. Completed at the end of each quarter for all peer support groups that ran that quarter, including new and continuing.
3. Information recorded according to template.
4. If more space is required in either table, insert additional rows as needed.
5. Emailed to the Departmental regional contact within two weeks of the end of each quarter.

Form B: Parent Satisfaction Summary

Purpose: Service delivery and performance monitoring

Requirement: Mandatory. Form should not be altered.

Records the level of parent satisfaction with the SPSP, based on parents completing Form I: Parent Satisfaction Survey.

1. Completed at the end of the financial year.
2. Information recorded according to template.
3. Emailed to the Departmental regional contact within two weeks of the end of Quarter 4 (i.e. along with the completed Form A: Quarterly Overview for Quarter 4).

Form C: Referral IN

Purpose: Service delivery

Requirement: Optional. Form can be altered.

Used when service providers refer families into the SPSP (optional).

1. Forms are distributed by Coordinators to service providers (e.g. MCH) who will refer to the SPSP. Coordinators should prepopulate their own contact details.
2. Completed by the service provider and provided to the Coordinator (post or email).
3. The form is stored by the Coordinator in accordance with their organisation’s client records policy.
4. Not required to be forwarded to the Department.

Form D: Referral OUT

Purpose: Service delivery

Requirement: Optional. Form can be altered.

Used by the Coordinator to refer families to services (optional).

1. Completed by the Coordinator based on discussion with the family and provided to the service (post or email).
2. Copy retained by the Coordinator in accordance with their organisation's client records policy.
3. Not required to be forwarded to the Department.

Form E: Family Record

Purpose: Service delivery and performance monitoring

Requirement: Mandatory. Existing fields should not be altered but additional fields may be added.

Records details of the parents participating in the SPSP.

1. Completed by the Coordinator with the parent(s) at their commencement in the program (completed once only). This is only completed for parents who are attending a peer support group or receiving individual support from the Coordinator.
2. Whether the parent has a Family Service Plan is also recorded on this form.
3. Not required to be forwarded to the Department.

Form F: Family Service Plan

Purpose: Service delivery

Requirement: Optional. Form can be altered.

A 'living document' that records the services and supports to which a parent(s) is interested in during or after their participation in the SPSP. The Family Service Plan is not mandatory but is considered best practice.

1. Completed by the Coordinator with the parent(s) at any time during the quarter.
2. The Coordinator stores the form in accordance with their organisation's client records policy and provides a copy to the parent(s).
3. Not required to be forwarded to the Department.

Form G: Attendance Record for Education/Information Session

Purpose: Performance monitoring and service delivery

Requirement: Optional. Form can be altered.

Records the details of each education/information session held each quarter and attendance.

1. Completed by parents attending an education/information session for each session held.
2. Copy retained by the Coordinator in accordance with their organisation's client records policy.
3. Not required to be forwarded to the Department.

Form H: Participant Record for Peer Support Groups

Purpose: Performance monitoring and service delivery

Requirement: Optional. Form can be altered.

Records the details of each peer support group in operation each quarter and the names of participating parents.

1. Completed by the Coordinator or parent leader facilitating the peer support groups each quarter.
2. Copy retained by the Coordinator in accordance with their organisation's client records policy.
3. Not required to be forwarded to the Department.

Form I: Parent Satisfaction Survey

Purpose: Performance monitoring and service delivery

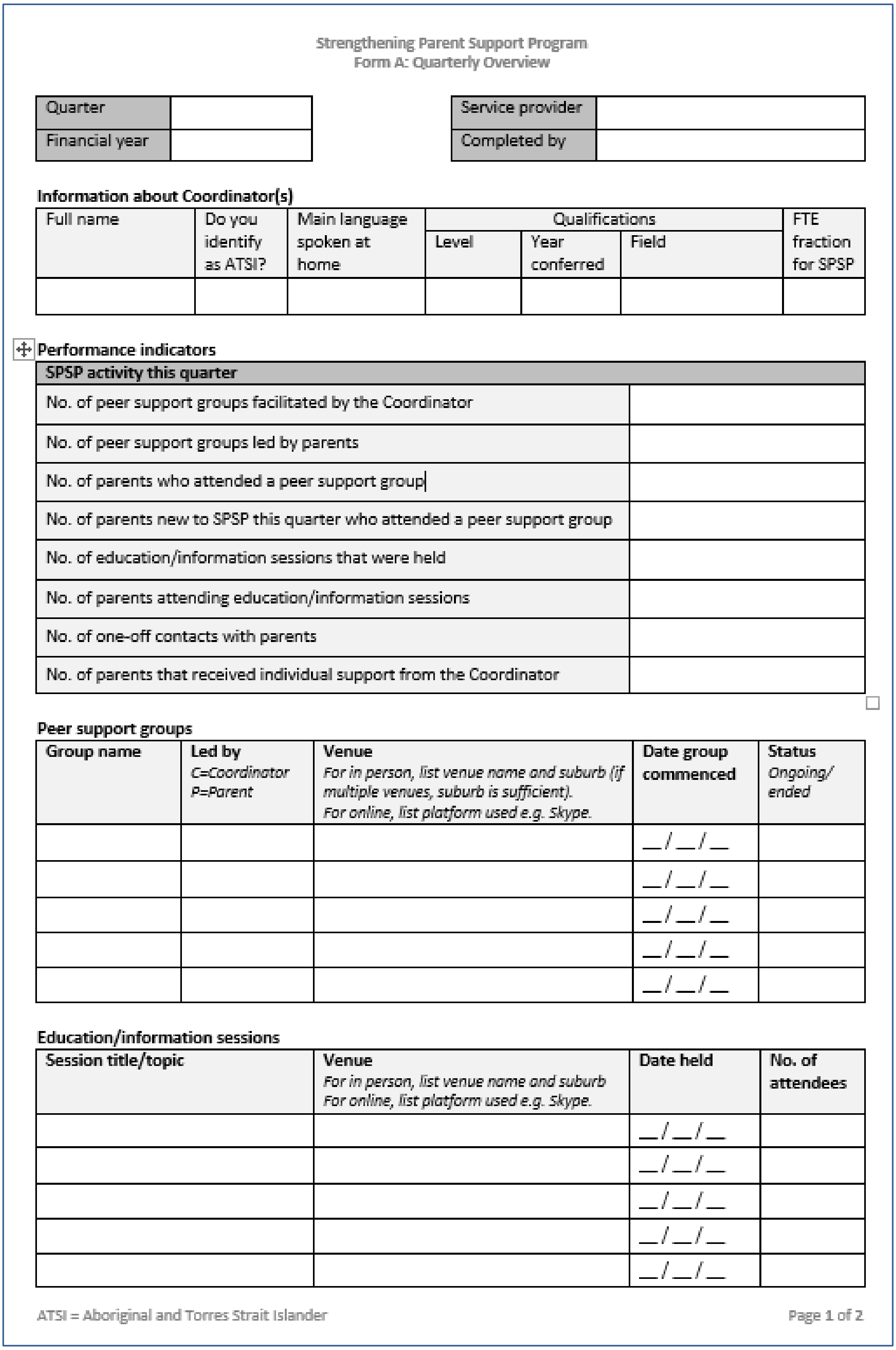
Requirement. Mandatory. Existing fields should not be altered but additional fields may be added.

Records whether parents who participated in peer support groups or received individual support from the Coordinator were satisfied with the program.

1. Completed by parents during the financial year, at a time that the Coordinator considers appropriate (see Parent Satisfaction Survey on page 14).
2. Copy retained by the Coordinator in accordance with their organisation's client records policy.
3. Not required to be forwarded to the Department.

Please note: it is important that forms with client details are stored securely by your organisation and returned promptly at the end of each quarter. Do not leave forms with personal information where their privacy may be compromised. Refer to the privacy statement on the forms for further information.

Form A: Quarterly Overview



Strengthening Parent Support Program
Form A: Quarterly Overview

Quarter	
Financial year	

Service provider	
Completed by	

Information about Coordinator(s)

Full name	Do you identify as ATSI?	Main language spoken at home	Qualifications			FTE fraction for SPSP
			Level	Year conferred	Field	

Performance indicators

SPSP activity this quarter	
No. of peer support groups facilitated by the Coordinator	
No. of peer support groups led by parents	
No. of parents who attended a peer support group	
No. of parents new to SPSP this quarter who attended a peer support group	
No. of education/information sessions that were held	
No. of parents attending education/information sessions	
No. of one-off contacts with parents	
No. of parents that received individual support from the Coordinator	

Peer support groups

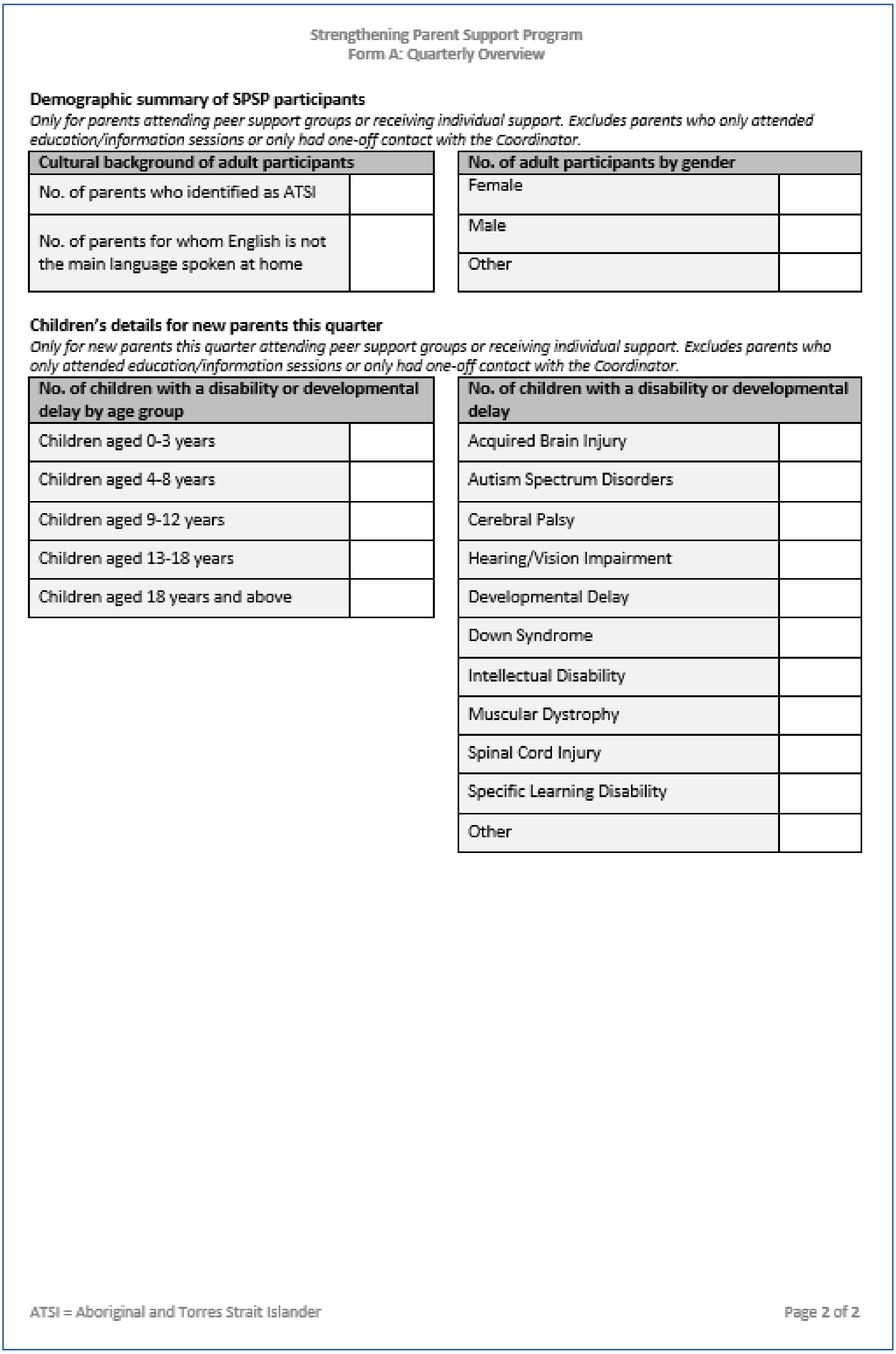
Group name	**Led by** *C=Coordinator* *P=Parent*	**Venue** *For in person, list venue name and suburb (if multiple venues, suburb is sufficient).* *For online, list platform used e.g. Skype.*	**Date group commenced**	**Status** *Ongoing/ ended*
			__/__/__	
			__/__/__	
			__/__/__	
			__/__/__	
			__/__/__	

Education/information sessions

Session title/topic	**Venue** *For in person, list venue name and suburb* *For online, list platform used e.g. Skype.*	**Date held**	**No. of attendees**
		__/__/__	
		__/__/__	
		__/__/__	
		__/__/__	
		__/__/__	

ATSI = Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Page 1 of 2



Strengthening Parent Support Program
Form A: Quarterly Overview

Demographic summary of SPSP participants

Only for parents attending peer support groups or receiving individual support. Excludes parents who only attended education/information sessions or only had one-off contact with the Coordinator.

Cultural background of adult participants	
No. of parents who identified as ATSI	
No. of parents for whom English is not the main language spoken at home	

No. of adult participants by gender	
Female	
Male	
Other	

Children's details for new parents this quarter

Only for new parents this quarter attending peer support groups or receiving individual support. Excludes parents who only attended education/information sessions or only had one-off contact with the Coordinator.

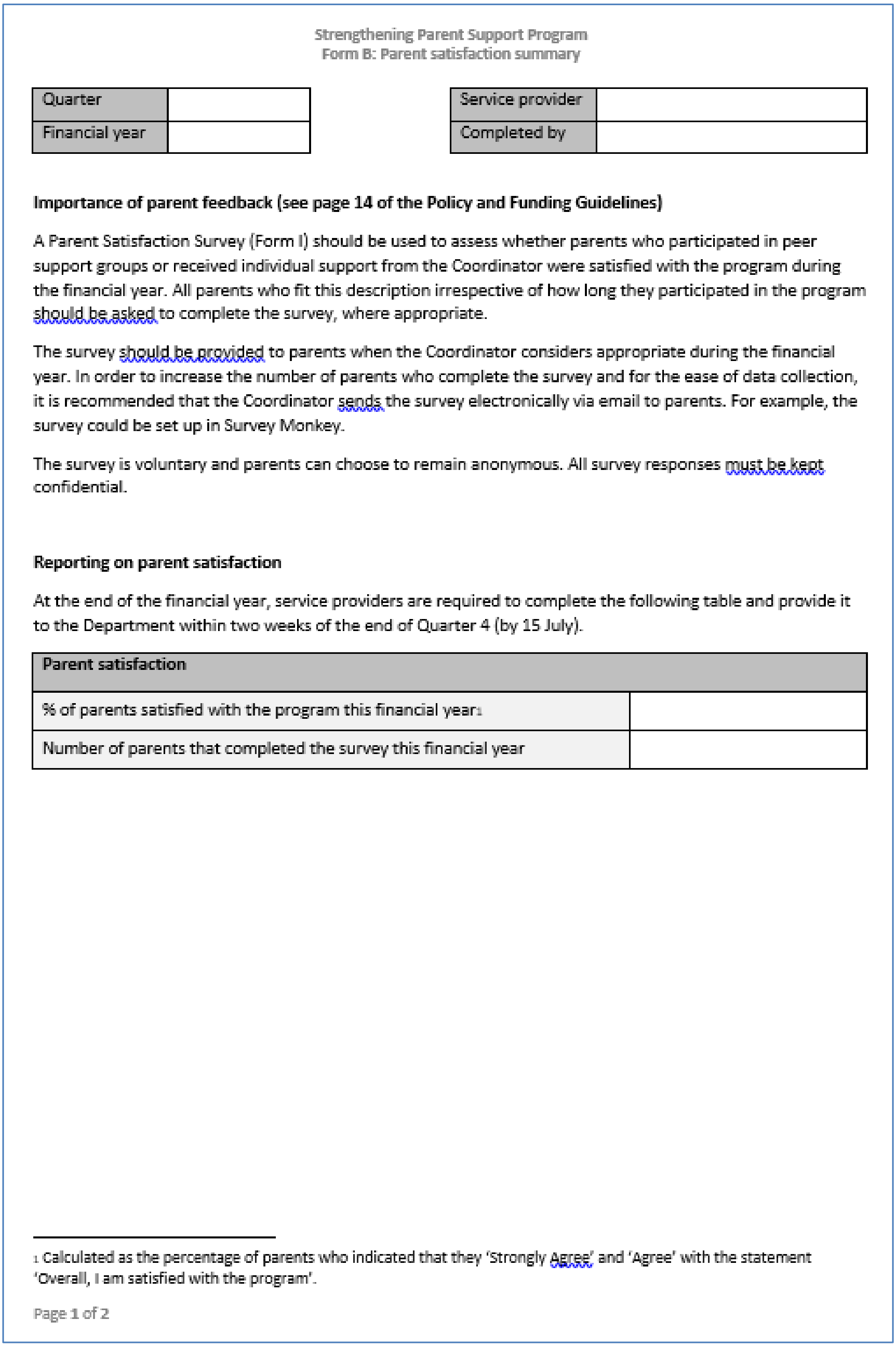
No. of children with a disability or developmental delay by age group	
Children aged 0-3 years	
Children aged 4-8 years	
Children aged 9-12 years	
Children aged 13-18 years	
Children aged 18 years and above	

No. of children with a disability or developmental delay	
Acquired Brain Injury	
Autism Spectrum Disorders	
Cerebral Palsy	
Hearing/Vision Impairment	
Developmental Delay	
Down Syndrome	
Intellectual Disability	
Muscular Dystrophy	
Spinal Cord Injury	
Specific Learning Disability	
Other	

ATSI = Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Page 2 of 2

Form B: Parent Satisfaction Summary



Strengthening Parent Support Program
Form B: Parent satisfaction summary

Quarter	
Financial year	

Service provider	
Completed by	

Importance of parent feedback (see page 14 of the Policy and Funding Guidelines)

A Parent Satisfaction Survey (Form I) should be used to assess whether parents who participated in peer support groups or received individual support from the Coordinator were satisfied with the program during the financial year. All parents who fit this description irrespective of how long they participated in the program should be asked to complete the survey, where appropriate.

The survey should be provided to parents when the Coordinator considers appropriate during the financial year. In order to increase the number of parents who complete the survey and for the ease of data collection, it is recommended that the Coordinator sends the survey electronically via email to parents. For example, the survey could be set up in Survey Monkey.

The survey is voluntary and parents can choose to remain anonymous. All survey responses must be kept confidential.

Reporting on parent satisfaction

At the end of the financial year, service providers are required to complete the following table and provide it to the Department within two weeks of the end of Quarter 4 (by 15 July).

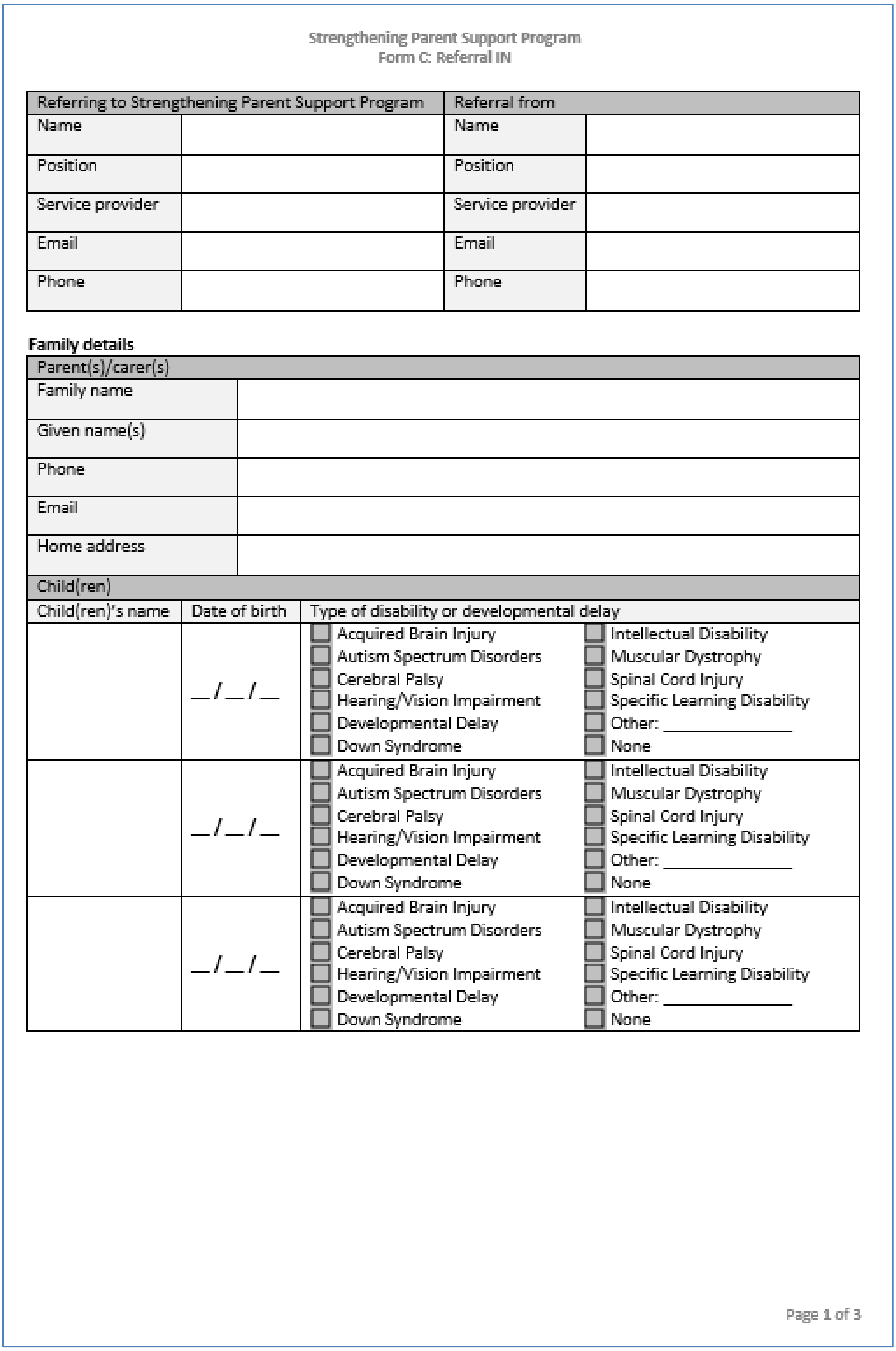
Parent satisfaction	
% of parents satisfied with the program this financial year[1]	
Number of parents that completed the survey this financial year	

---

[1] Calculated as the percentage of parents who indicated that they 'Strongly Agree' and 'Agree' with the statement 'Overall, I am satisfied with the program'.

Page **1** of **2**

Form C: Referral IN



Strengthening Parent Support Program
Form C: Referral IN

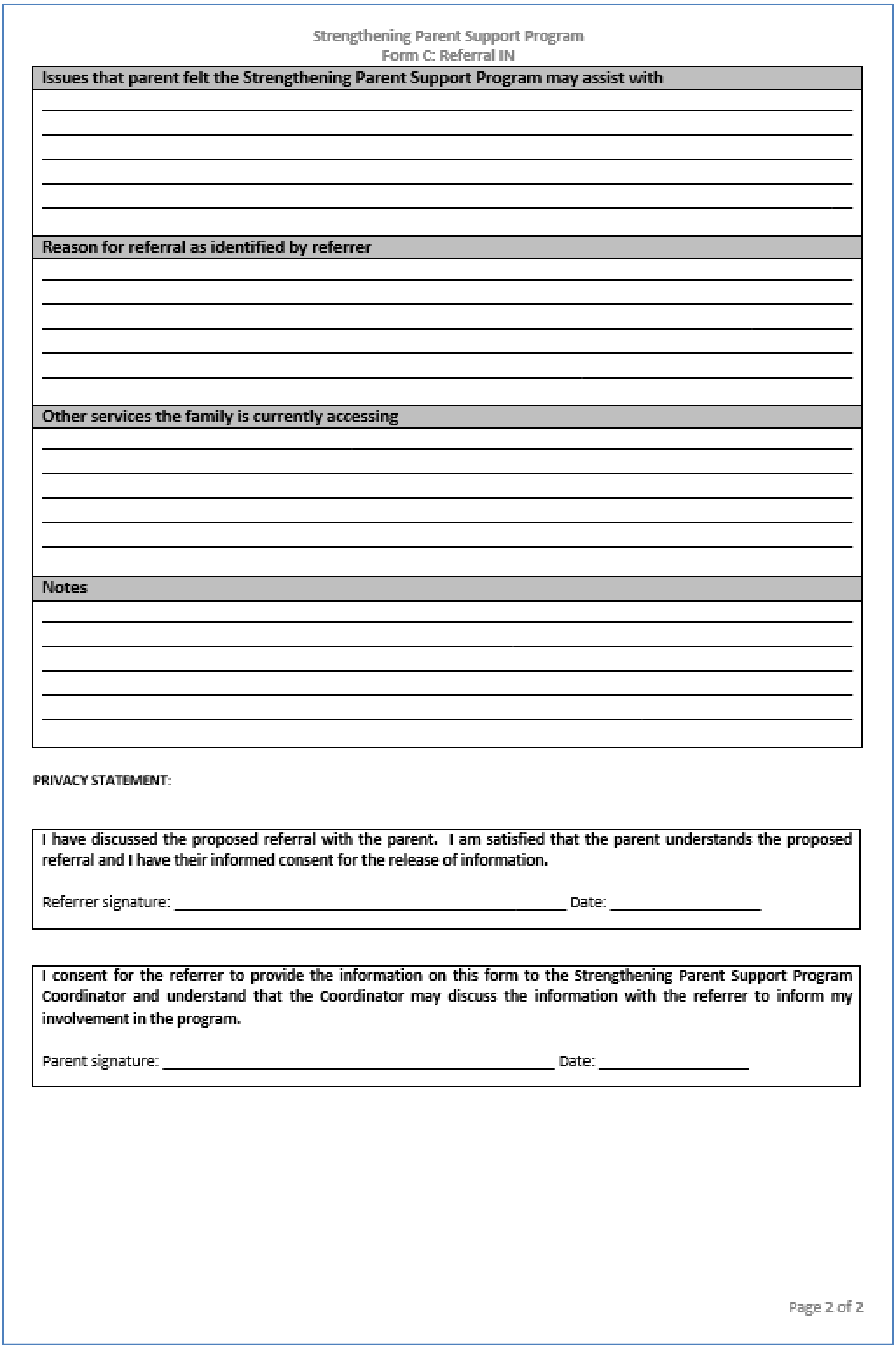
Referring to Strengthening Parent Support Program		Referral from	
Name		Name	
Position		Position	
Service provider		Service provider	
Email		Email	
Phone		Phone	

Family details

Parent(s)/carer(s)	
Family name	
Given name(s)	
Phone	
Email	
Home address	

Child(ren)			
Child(ren)'s name	Date of birth	Type of disability or developmental delay	
	__/__/__	☐ Acquired Brain Injury ☐ Autism Spectrum Disorders ☐ Cerebral Palsy ☐ Hearing/Vision Impairment ☐ Developmental Delay ☐ Down Syndrome	☐ Intellectual Disability ☐ Muscular Dystrophy ☐ Spinal Cord Injury ☐ Specific Learning Disability ☐ Other: ______________ ☐ None
	__/__/__	☐ Acquired Brain Injury ☐ Autism Spectrum Disorders ☐ Cerebral Palsy ☐ Hearing/Vision Impairment ☐ Developmental Delay ☐ Down Syndrome	☐ Intellectual Disability ☐ Muscular Dystrophy ☐ Spinal Cord Injury ☐ Specific Learning Disability ☐ Other: ______________ ☐ None
	__/__/__	☐ Acquired Brain Injury ☐ Autism Spectrum Disorders ☐ Cerebral Palsy ☐ Hearing/Vision Impairment ☐ Developmental Delay ☐ Down Syndrome	☐ Intellectual Disability ☐ Muscular Dystrophy ☐ Spinal Cord Injury ☐ Specific Learning Disability ☐ Other: ______________ ☐ None

Page 1 of 3



Strengthening Parent Support Program
Form C: Referral IN

Issues that parent felt the Strengthening Parent Support Program may assist with
Reason for referral as identified by referrer
Other services the family is currently accessing
Notes

PRIVACY STATEMENT:

I have discussed the proposed referral with the parent. I am satisfied that the parent understands the proposed referral and I have their informed consent for the release of information.

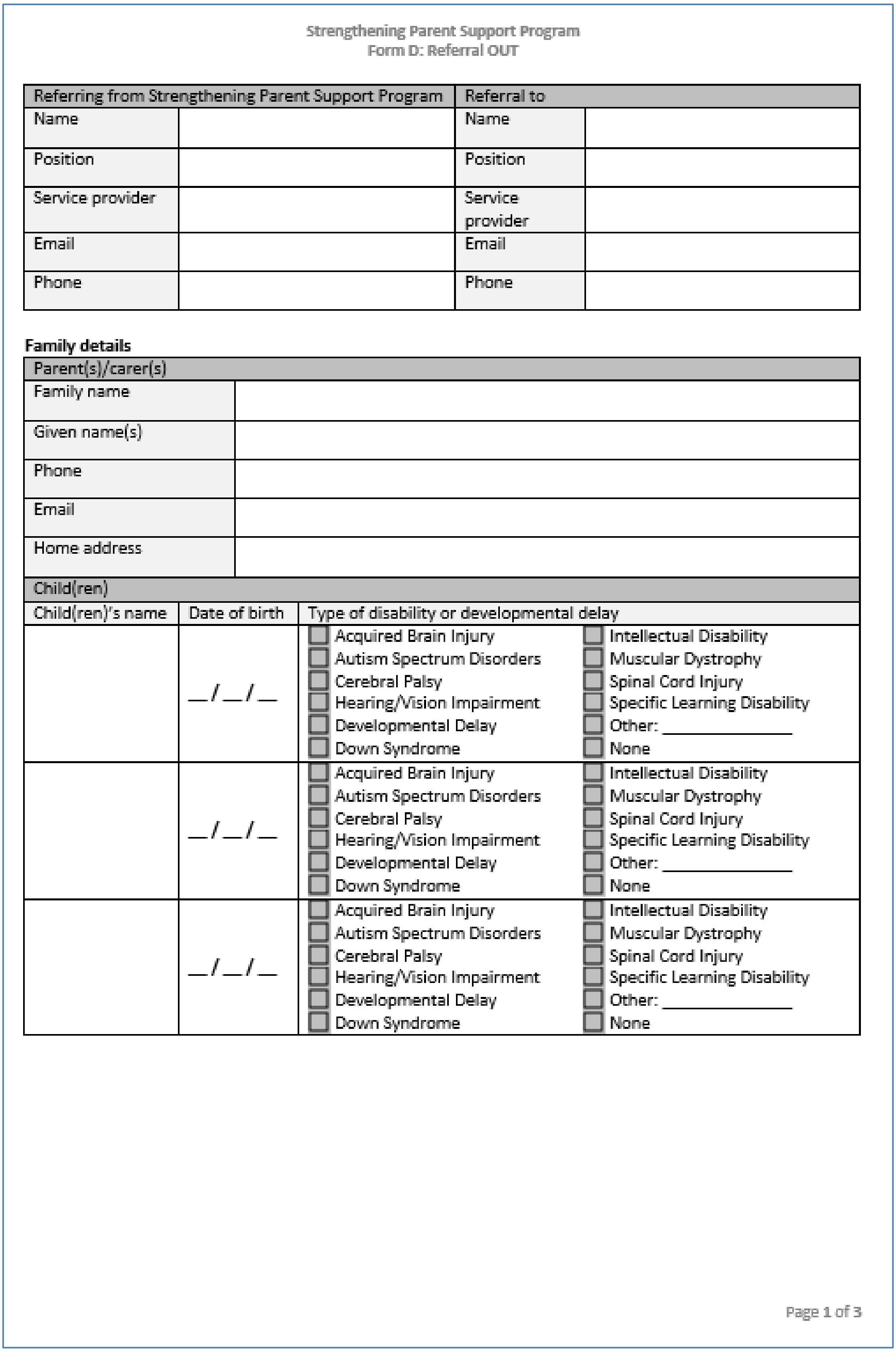
Referrer signature: ______________________________ Date: ____________

I consent for the referrer to provide the information on this form to the Strengthening Parent Support Program Coordinator and understand that the Coordinator may discuss the information with the referrer to inform my involvement in the program.

Parent signature: ______________________________ Date: ____________

Page 2 of 2

Form D: Referral OUT



Strengthening Parent Support Program
Form D: Referral OUT

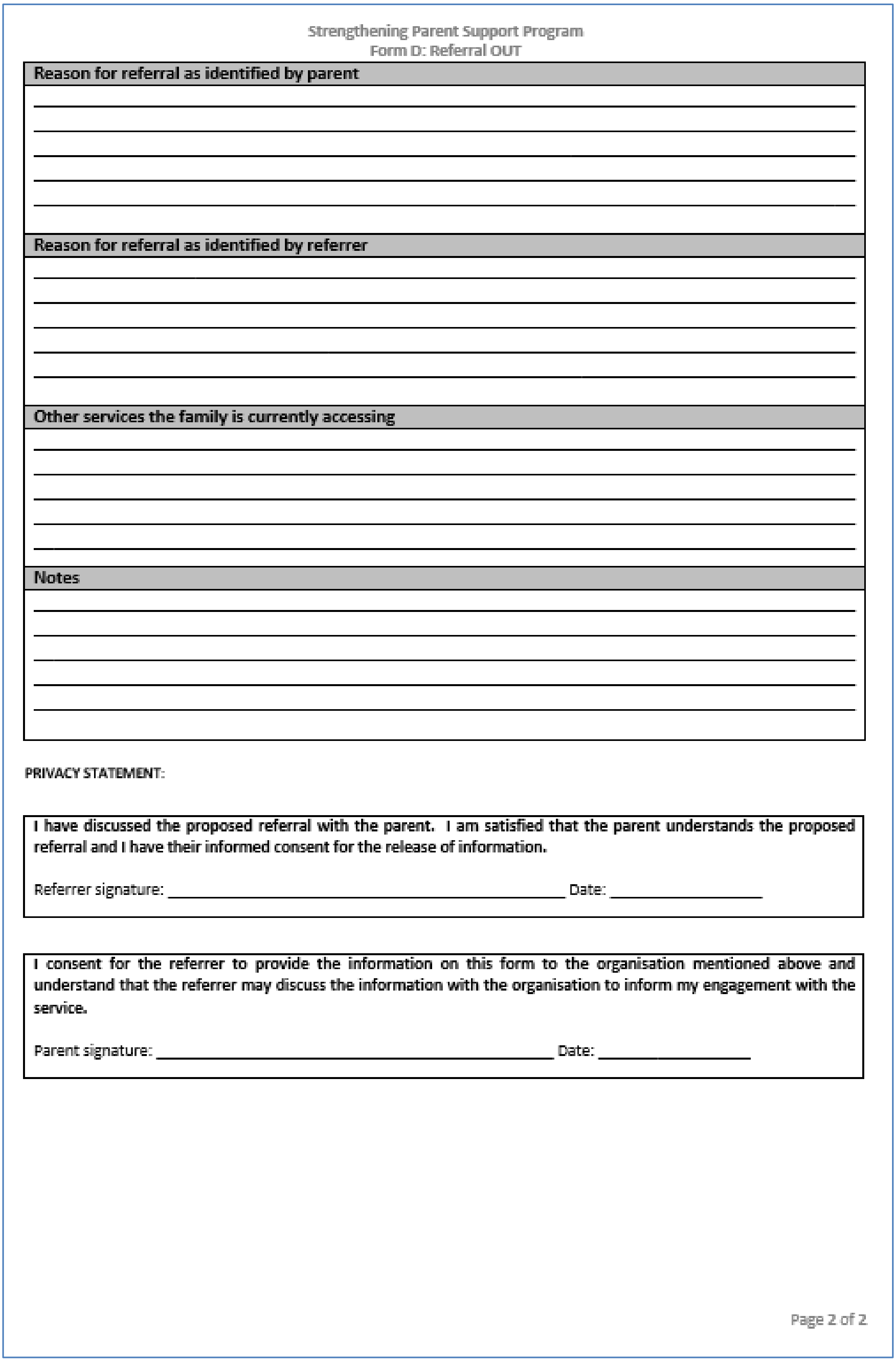
Referring from Strengthening Parent Support Program		Referral to	
Name		Name	
Position		Position	
Service provider		Service provider	
Email		Email	
Phone		Phone	

Family details

Parent(s)/carer(s)	
Family name	
Given name(s)	
Phone	
Email	
Home address	

Child(ren)			
Child(ren)'s name	Date of birth	Type of disability or developmental delay	
	__/__/__	☐ Acquired Brain Injury ☐ Autism Spectrum Disorders ☐ Cerebral Palsy ☐ Hearing/Vision Impairment ☐ Developmental Delay ☐ Down Syndrome	☐ Intellectual Disability ☐ Muscular Dystrophy ☐ Spinal Cord Injury ☐ Specific Learning Disability ☐ Other: ______________ ☐ None
	__/__/__	☐ Acquired Brain Injury ☐ Autism Spectrum Disorders ☐ Cerebral Palsy ☐ Hearing/Vision Impairment ☐ Developmental Delay ☐ Down Syndrome	☐ Intellectual Disability ☐ Muscular Dystrophy ☐ Spinal Cord Injury ☐ Specific Learning Disability ☐ Other: ______________ ☐ None
	__/__/__	☐ Acquired Brain Injury ☐ Autism Spectrum Disorders ☐ Cerebral Palsy ☐ Hearing/Vision Impairment ☐ Developmental Delay ☐ Down Syndrome	☐ Intellectual Disability ☐ Muscular Dystrophy ☐ Spinal Cord Injury ☐ Specific Learning Disability ☐ Other: ______________ ☐ None

Page 1 of 3



Strengthening Parent Support Program
Form D: Referral OUT

Reason for referral as identified by parent
Reason for referral as identified by referrer
Other services the family is currently accessing
Notes

PRIVACY STATEMENT:

I have discussed the proposed referral with the parent. I am satisfied that the parent understands the proposed referral and I have their informed consent for the release of information.

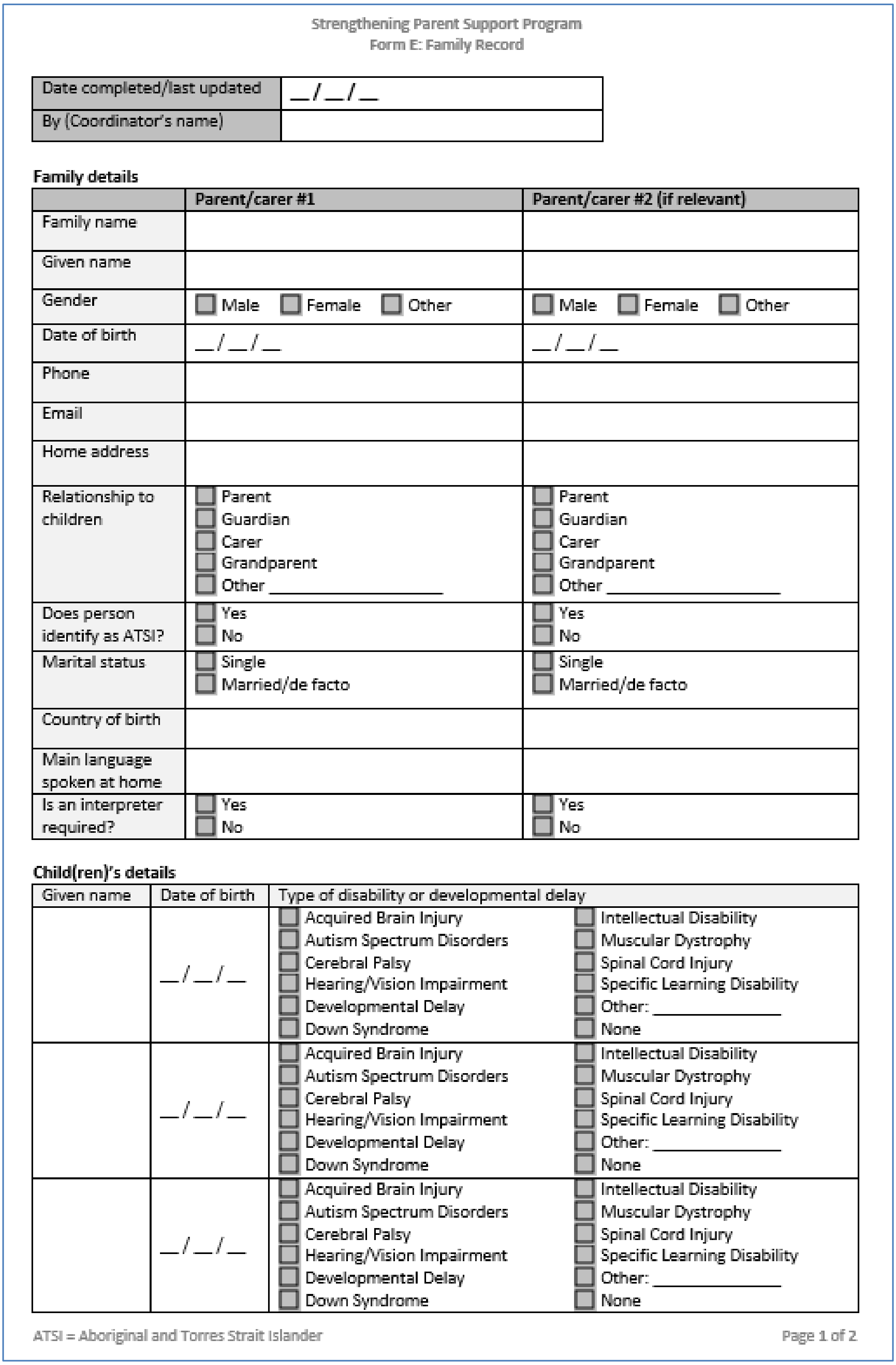
Referrer signature: ____ Date: ________________

I consent for the referrer to provide the information on this form to the organisation mentioned above and understand that the referrer may discuss the information with the organisation to inform my engagement with the service.

Parent signature: ____ Date: ________________

Page 2 of 2

Form E: Family Record



Strengthening Parent Support Program
Form E: Family Record

Date completed/last updated	__/__/__
By (Coordinator's name)	

Family details

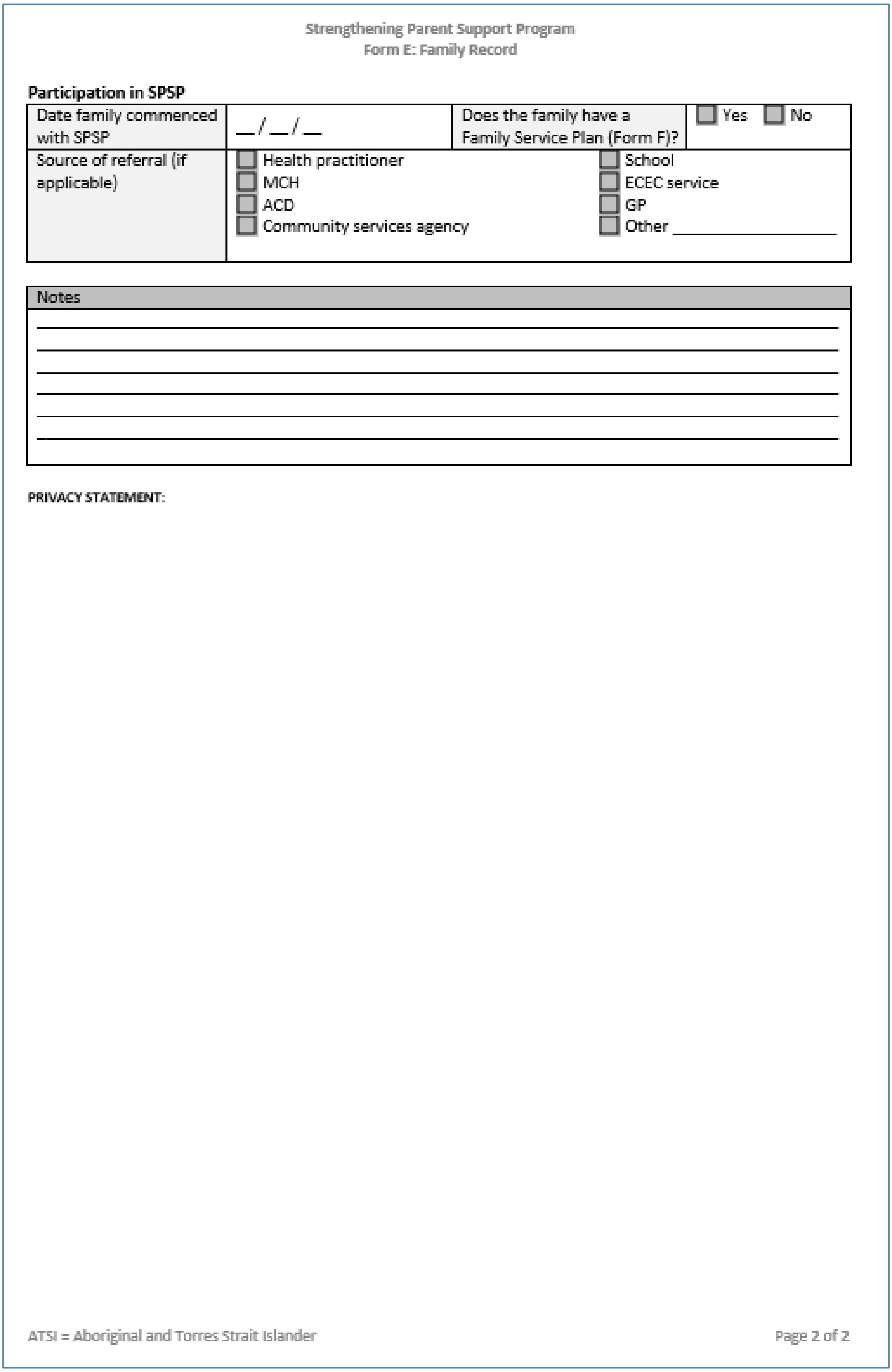
	Parent/carer #1	Parent/carer #2 (if relevant)
Family name		
Given name		
Gender	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other	☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other
Date of birth	__/__/__	__/__/__
Phone		
Email		
Home address		
Relationship to children	☐ Parent ☐ Guardian ☐ Carer ☐ Grandparent ☐ Other ________________	☐ Parent ☐ Guardian ☐ Carer ☐ Grandparent ☐ Other ________________
Does person identify as ATSI?	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No
Marital status	☐ Single ☐ Married/de facto	☐ Single ☐ Married/de facto
Country of birth		
Main language spoken at home		
Is an interpreter required?	☐ Yes ☐ No	☐ Yes ☐ No

Child(ren)'s details

Given name	Date of birth	Type of disability or developmental delay	
	__/__/__	☐ Acquired Brain Injury ☐ Autism Spectrum Disorders ☐ Cerebral Palsy ☐ Hearing/Vision Impairment ☐ Developmental Delay ☐ Down Syndrome	☐ Intellectual Disability ☐ Muscular Dystrophy ☐ Spinal Cord Injury ☐ Specific Learning Disability ☐ Other: ____________ ☐ None
	__/__/__	☐ Acquired Brain Injury ☐ Autism Spectrum Disorders ☐ Cerebral Palsy ☐ Hearing/Vision Impairment ☐ Developmental Delay ☐ Down Syndrome	☐ Intellectual Disability ☐ Muscular Dystrophy ☐ Spinal Cord Injury ☐ Specific Learning Disability ☐ Other: ____________ ☐ None
	__/__/__	☐ Acquired Brain Injury ☐ Autism Spectrum Disorders ☐ Cerebral Palsy ☐ Hearing/Vision Impairment ☐ Developmental Delay ☐ Down Syndrome	☐ Intellectual Disability ☐ Muscular Dystrophy ☐ Spinal Cord Injury ☐ Specific Learning Disability ☐ Other: ____________ ☐ None

ATSI = Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Page 1 of 2



Strengthening Parent Support Program
Form E: Family Record

Participation in SPSP

Date family commenced with SPSP	__/__/__	Does the family have a Family Service Plan (Form F)?	☐ Yes ☐ No
Source of referral (if applicable)	☐ Health practitioner ☐ MCH ☐ ACD ☐ Community services agency	☐ School ☐ ECEC service ☐ GP ☐ Other __________________	

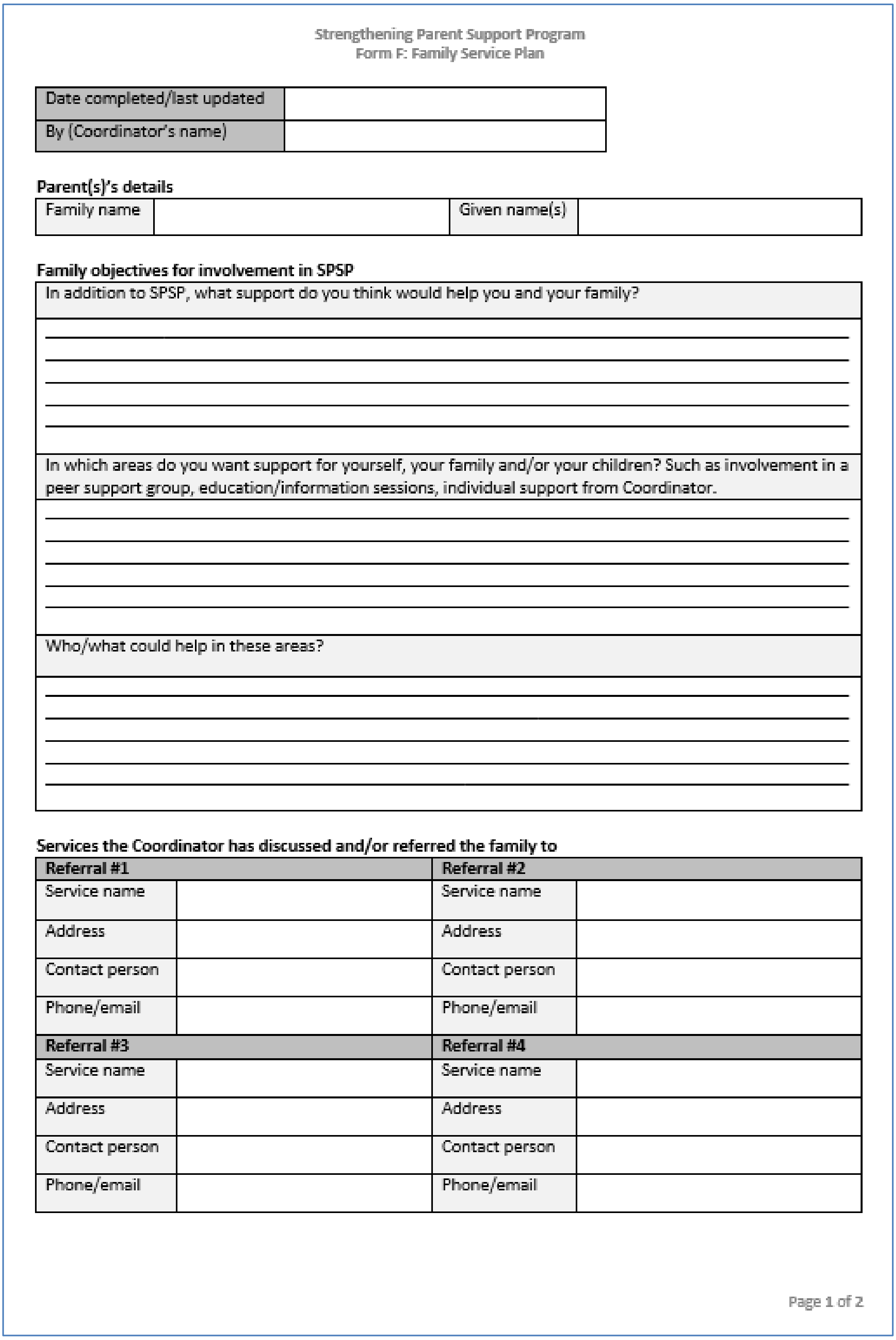
Notes
____ ____ ____ ____ ____ ____

PRIVACY STATEMENT:

ATSI = Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

Page 2 of 2

Form F: Family Service Plan



Strengthening Parent Support Program
Form F: Family Service Plan

Date completed/last updated	
By (Coordinator's name)	

Parent(s)'s details

Family name		Given name(s)	

Family objectives for involvement in SPSP

In addition to SPSP, what support do you think would help you and your family?

____

____

____

____

____

In which areas do you want support for yourself, your family and/or your children? Such as involvement in a peer support group, education/information sessions, individual support from Coordinator.

____

____

____

____

____

Who/what could help in these areas?

____

____

____

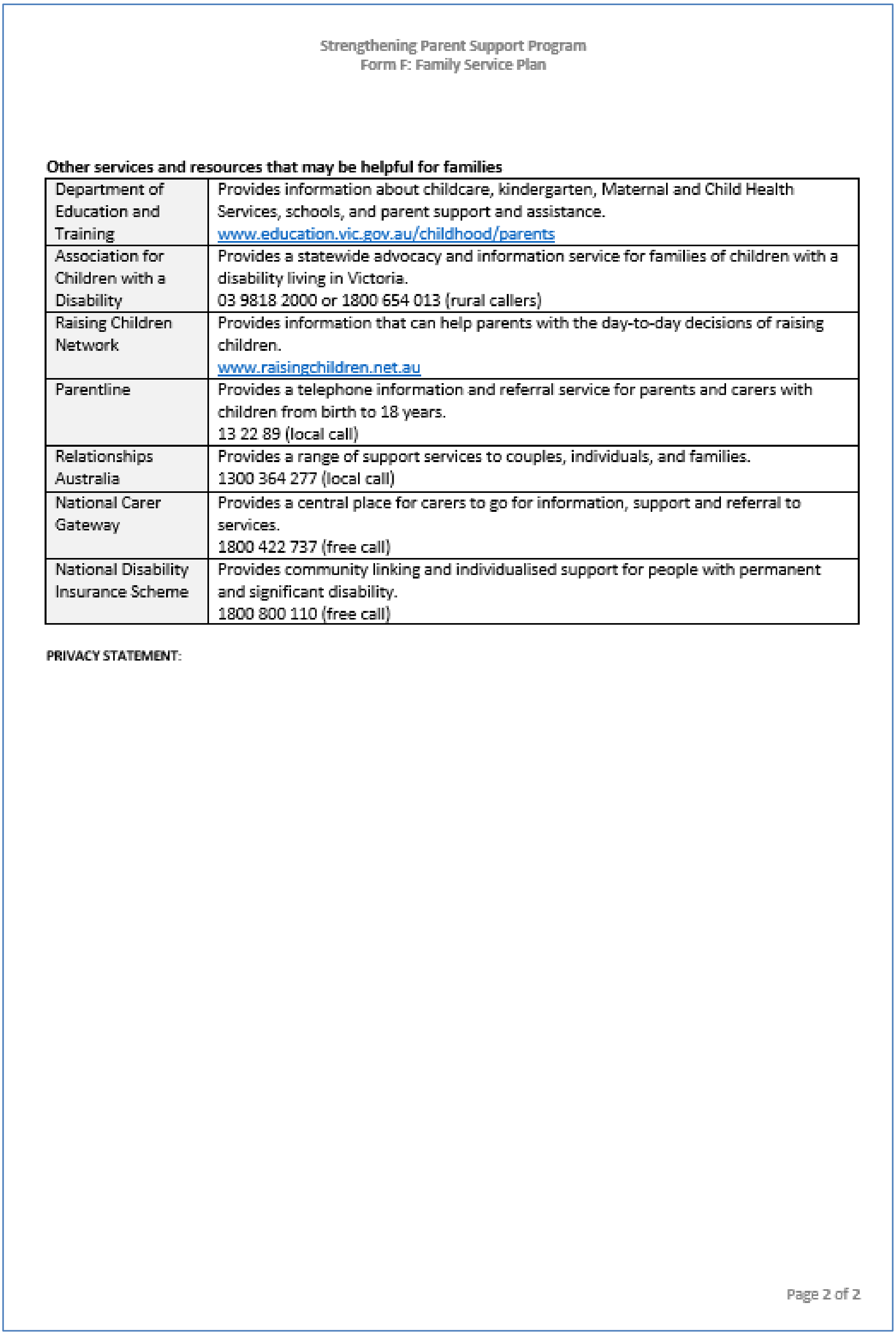
____

____

Services the Coordinator has discussed and/or referred the family to

Referral #1		**Referral #2**	
Service name		Service name	
Address		Address	
Contact person		Contact person	
Phone/email		Phone/email	
Referral #3		**Referral #4**	
Service name		Service name	
Address		Address	
Contact person		Contact person	
Phone/email		Phone/email	

Page 1 of 2

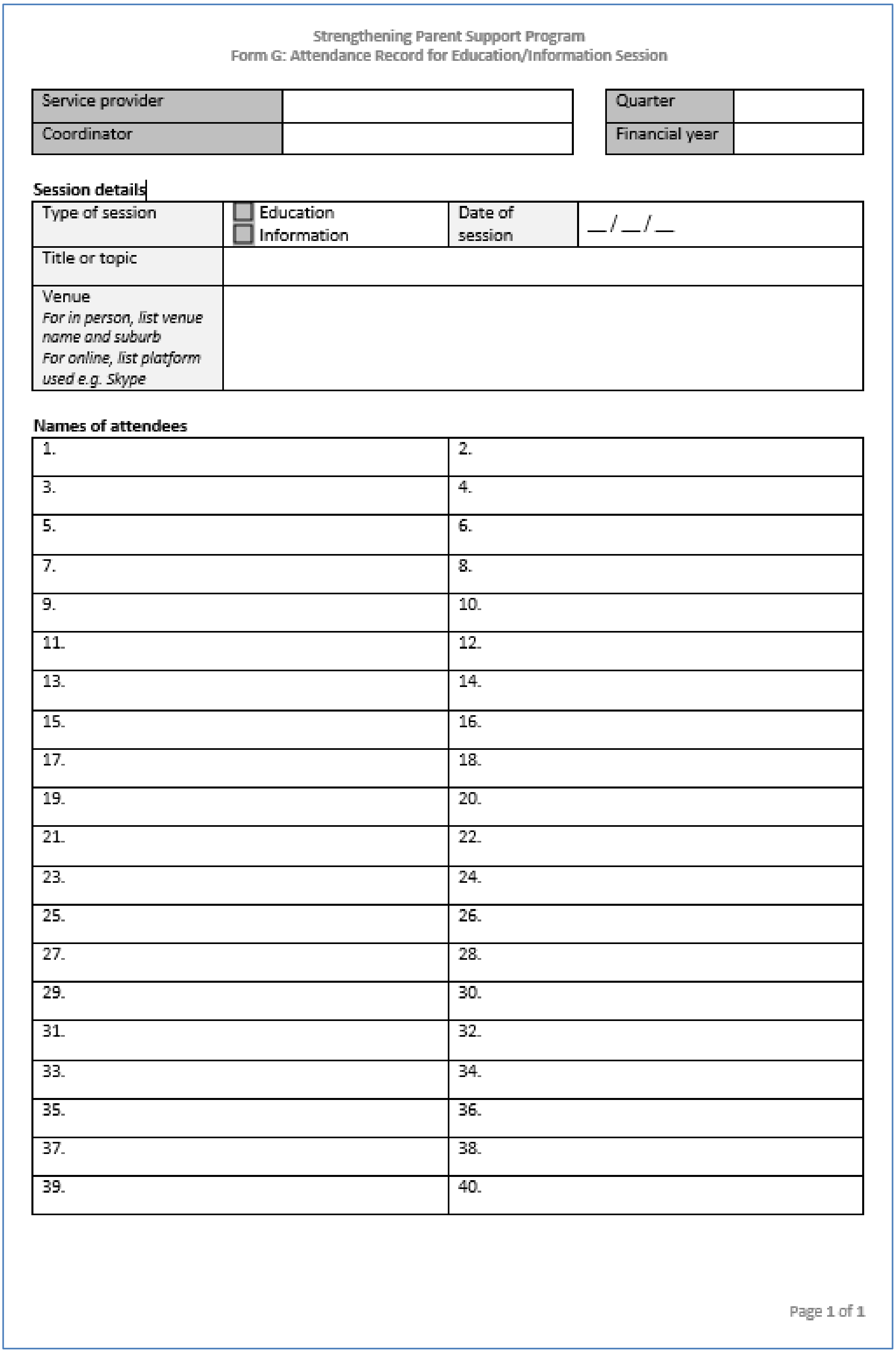


Other services and resources that may be helpful for families

Department of Education and Training	Provides information about childcare, kindergarten, Maternal and Child Health Services, schools, and parent support and assistance. www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents
Association for Children with a Disability	Provides a statewide advocacy and information service for families of children with a disability living in Victoria. 03 9818 2000 or 1800 654 013 (rural callers)
Raising Children Network	Provides information that can help parents with the day-to-day decisions of raising children. www.raisingchildren.net.au
Parentline	Provides a telephone information and referral service for parents and carers with children from birth to 18 years. 13 22 89 (local call)
Relationships Australia	Provides a range of support services to couples, individuals, and families. 1300 364 277 (local call)
National Carer Gateway	Provides a central place for carers to go for information, support and referral to services. 1800 422 737 (free call)
National Disability Insurance Scheme	Provides community linking and individualised support for people with permanent and significant disability. 1800 800 110 (free call)

PRIVACY STATEMENT:

Form G: Attendance Record for Education/Information Session



Strengthening Parent Support Program
Form G: Attendance Record for Education/Information Session

Service provider		Quarter	
Coordinator		Financial year	

Session details

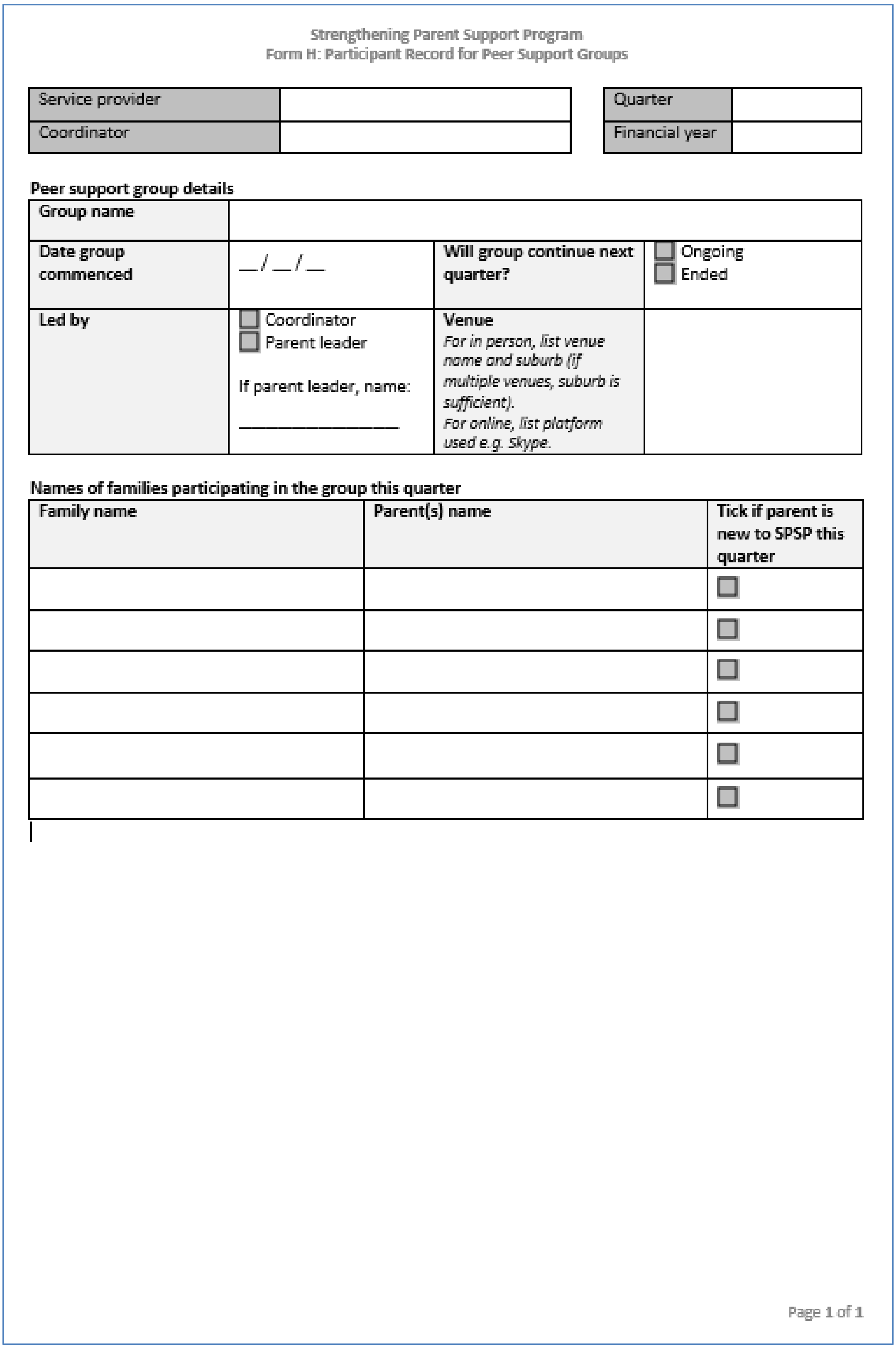
Type of session	☐ Education ☐ Information	Date of session	__/__/__
Title or topic			
Venue *For in person, list venue name and suburb* *For online, list platform used e.g. Skype*			

Names of attendees

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.
11.	12.
13.	14.
15.	16.
17.	18.
19.	20.
21.	22.
23.	24.
25.	26.
27.	28.
29.	30.
31.	32.
33.	34.
35.	36.
37.	38.
39.	40.

Page 1 of 1

Form H: Participant Record for Peer Support Groups



Strengthening Parent Support Program
Form H: Participant Record for Peer Support Groups

Service provider	
Coordinator	

Quarter	
Financial year	

Peer support group details

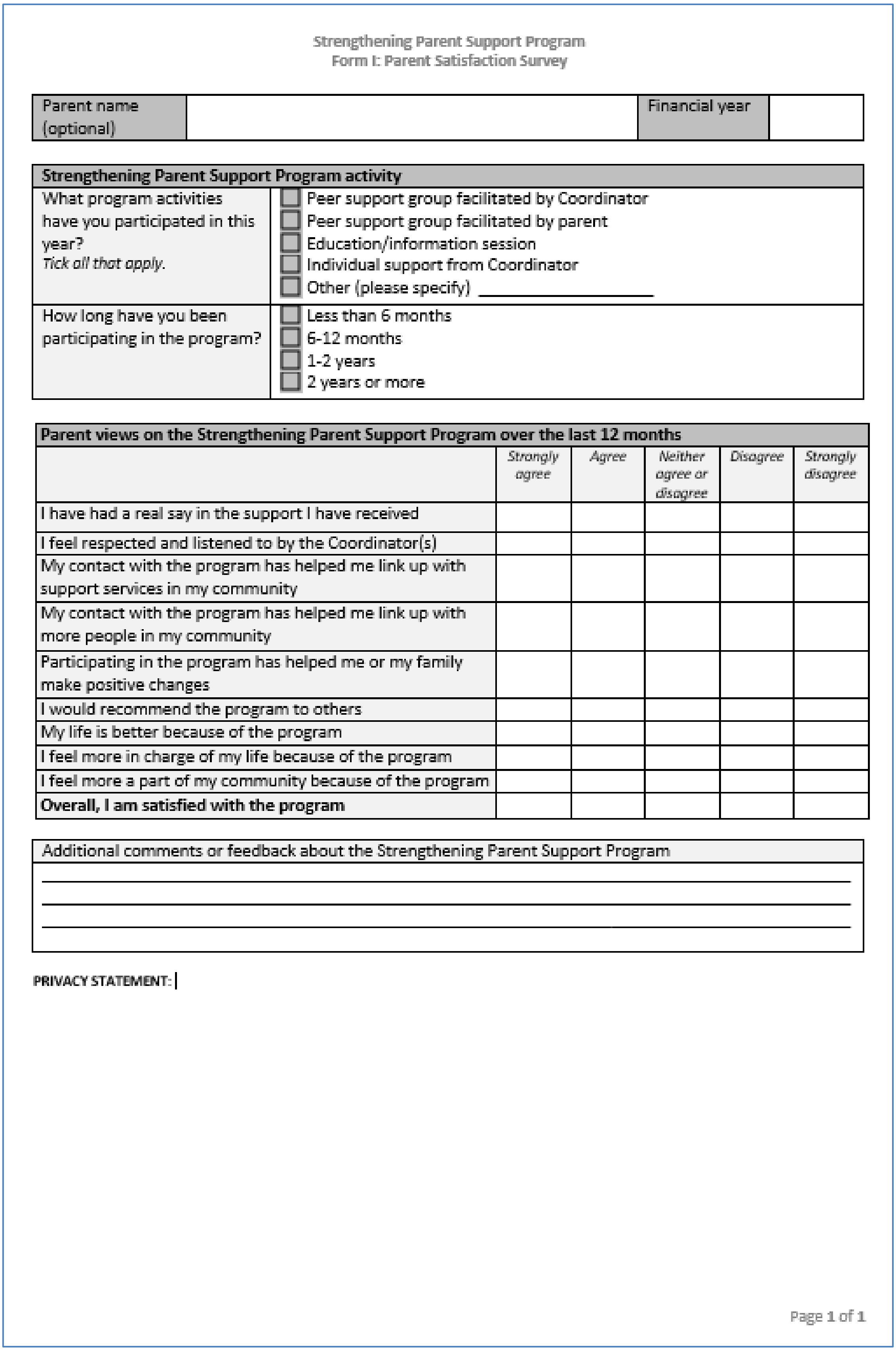
Group name			
Date group commenced	__/ __/ __	**Will group continue next quarter?**	☐ Ongoing ☐ Ended
Led by	☐ Coordinator ☐ Parent leader If parent leader, name: __________________	**Venue** *For in person, list venue name and suburb (if multiple venues, suburb is sufficient).* *For online, list platform used e.g. Skype.*	

Names of families participating in the group this quarter

Family name	**Parent(s) name**	**Tick if parent is new to SPSP this quarter**
		☐
		☐
		☐
		☐
		☐
		☐

Page 1 of 1

Form I: Parent Satisfaction Survey



Strengthening Parent Support Program
Form I: Parent Satisfaction Survey

Parent name (optional)		Financial year	

Strengthening Parent Support Program activity	
What program activities have you participated in this year? *Tick all that apply.*	☐ Peer support group facilitated by Coordinator ☐ Peer support group facilitated by parent ☐ Education/information session ☐ Individual support from Coordinator ☐ Other (please specify) ____________________
How long have you been participating in the program?	☐ Less than 6 months ☐ 6-12 months ☐ 1-2 years ☐ 2 years or more

Parent views on the Strengthening Parent Support Program over the last 12 months					
	Strongly agree	*Agree*	*Neither agree or disagree*	*Disagree*	*Strongly disagree*
I have had a real say in the support I have received					
I feel respected and listened to by the Coordinator(s)					
My contact with the program has helped me link up with support services in my community					
My contact with the program has helped me link up with more people in my community					
Participating in the program has helped me or my family make positive changes					
I would recommend the program to others					
My life is better because of the program					
I feel more in charge of my life because of the program					
I feel more a part of my community because of the program					
Overall, I am satisfied with the program					

Additional comments or feedback about the Strengthening Parent Support Program

____

____

____

PRIVACY STATEMENT:

APPENDIX 2A: QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES FOR STRENGTHENING PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Qualifications

The Guidelines require that all Coordinators employed after 1 January 2017 hold, or are working towards, an appropriate qualification for the role.

The following qualifications, listed by field of study, are appropriate qualifications at a minimum Diploma level.

Early childhood/education	Community services	Health
• Special Education • Early Childhood Education and Care • Teaching (Primary/Secondary)	• Community Development • Community Services • Disability • Family Intake and Support Work • Social Work • Child, Youth and Family Intervention	• Counselling • Psychology • Early Childhood Intervention • Allied Health

Competencies

Coordinators are required to have the following knowledge and skills:

Knowledge – demonstrated knowledge and/or understanding of:

- disability and family support service systems
- peer support
- group processes
- Victorian child safe standards
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

Skills – ability to:

- develop relationships with local disability support services and referral sources to develop referral pathways for parents with a child with a disability or a developmental delay
- provide information, assistance, support and referral in response to parent requests where the family has a child with a disability or a developmental delay
- provide evidence-based information to parents and peer support groups to promote up to date knowledge of disability services and support available
- provide assistance and support to existing peer support groups and assist in the establishment of new groups in response to needs identified by parents
- support parents to identify strategies to deal with a range of disability related issues
- coordinate education/information sessions for parents of children with a disability or developmental delay according to identified need
- liaise with other service providers within the regional network, the SPSP Coordinator network and the Association for Children with a Disability
- provide information and support to encourage parents to self-advocate for their child, or provide advocacy referral if required
- undertake service planning with parents to link them into relevant community supports and services
- communicate respectfully and effectively with parents using language parents understand
- utilise effective active listening and interpersonal communication skills
- respond in a timely and appropriate way to group dynamics and individual issues.

APPENDIX 2B: SAMPLE COORDINATOR POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position title: Strengthening Parent Support Program (SPSP) Coordinator

Position summary:

The SPSP is a Victorian Government funded program that assists parents and carers who have a child with a disability or developmental delay to connect with other families and the community.

The program employs a Coordinator to support the establishment of peer support groups that provide opportunities for parents in similar situations to meet on a regular basis:

- for mutual support and to develop social connections and networks
- to find out about available local support services and evidence-based parenting information
- to share strategies and advice
- to develop skills (including self-advocacy).

Coordinators also meet individually with parents to provide support, information and referrals to other services and host education/information sessions.

Coordinators are required to have completed, or be working towards completing qualifications suitable to the role at Diploma level or above.

Coordinators are required to have the following:

Knowledge – demonstrated knowledge and/or understanding of:

- disability and family support service systems
- peer support
- group processes
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- child safe standards (Department of Health and Human Services).

Skills – ability to:

- develop relationships with local disability support services and referral sources to develop referral pathways for parents with a child with a disability or a developmental delay
- provide information, assistance, support and referral in response to parent requests where the family has a child with a disability or a developmental delay
- provide evidence-based information to parents and peer support groups to promote up to date knowledge of disability services and support available
- provide assistance and support to existing peer support groups and assist in the establishment of new groups in response to needs identified by parents
- support parents to identify strategies to deal with a range of disability related issues
- coordinate education/information sessions for parents of children with a disability or developmental delay according to identified need
- liaise with other service providers within the regional network, the SPSP Coordinator network and the Association for Children with a Disability
- provide information and support to encourage parents to self-advocate for their child, or provide advocacy referral if required
- undertake service planning with parents to link them into relevant community supports and services
- communicate respectfully and effectively with parents using language parents understand
- utilise effective active listening and interpersonal communication skills
- respond in a timely and appropriate way to group dynamics and individual issues.