



## AA ESSENTIALS FOR PARENT JOB SEEKERS

Most of the parent job seekers who register with the Job Network will have school aged kids, but this doesn't mean that child care isn't an issue.

Kids get sick, school holidays come around every 9 weeks - then there are pupil free days and in many cases, employment hours will fall outside of standard school hours.

We believe that every parent returning to work needs to be able to answer the following questions:

- ✓ *Where will your children go after school?*
- ✓ *What will you do if your child is sick and can't go to school?*
- ✓ *What will you do if your child gets sick in school and must go home?*
- ✓ *What will your children do during school holidays?*
- ✓ *What will you do on pupil free days and half-days?*
- ✓ *How will you arrange support for your child on school day events like sports carnivals or award presentations?*
- ✓ *Do you have back up child care plans if you need to work occasionally on weekends or outside of child care availability?*
- ✓ *If you have older children who can stay alone, do you have support networks in case of emergencies, and have they had experience being left at home alone in the past?*

Parents need to have answers to these questions - if they do not, they will not be prepared for a successful re-entry to work.

These issues should be addressed in Activity Agreements. Employment Consultants can help by providing referrals and information about Out of School Hours Care and Vacation Care. They should also ensure that parents have considered strategies for dealing with childhood minor illnesses - without a backup plan in place, work absences will result in failed placements.

Many Employment Consultants may find that child care is a difficult issue to deal with. Many parents are reluctant to use child care, and those with children over 12 years of age may not have access to child care at all. Working through these issues early will help ensure a better long term result for you and your client.

Your initial Activity Agreement sets the scene for an ongoing professional relationship – make sure that you begin by addressing the most important concerns – and never forget that your client has another job already, they are a primary carer parent, and that will always be their number one priority!