

Theory of Change: Mellow
Growing Together (MGT)
Parenting Programmes

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1 Vision:

we want every child – wherever they are in the world – to be part of a safe and nurturing family that will allow them and future generations the best possible start in life.

2 Problem / Need

Early childhood (birth–3 years) is a critical developmental period. Families facing adversity including stress, low confidence, poor mental health, trauma, isolation, or limited support often struggle with:

- Understanding and responding to infant/toddler needs.
- Managing challenging behaviours (toddlers).
- Building secure attachment relationships.
- Maintaining consistent, nurturing routines.
- Accessing timely, strengths-based support.

Without effective early support, difficulties can escalate, affecting child development, family wellbeing, and long-term outcomes.

3 Programme Purpose

Mellow Growing Together (MGT) aims to strengthen early parent–child relationships, improve parental wellbeing and reflective capacity, and support children’s emotional and behavioural development through structured, therapeutic, relationship-based interventions.

4 Target Group

- Parents/carers of infants and toddlers (0 -60 months).
- Families experiencing social, emotional, or practical challenges.
- Families who need support with emotional regulation, behaviour, and building routines.
- Parents who benefit from intensive, relationship-based support.

5 Assumptions (Core Mechanisms of Change)

- Secure attachment is built through sensitive, attuned, consistent caregiving.
- Parental wellbeing directly affects a parent's ability to engage and respond sensitively.
- Reflective capacity (ability to understand the child's perspective) increases warmth, empathy, and responsive caregiving.
- Learning is most effective when practised during real interactions with the child.
- Peer support reduces isolation and reinforces positive behaviour change.
- Structured routines reduce stress and improve emotional regulation (for both parent and child).

These are aligned with the Mellow Parenting Evaluation Framework domains:

- Parental wellbeing
- Parent-child relationship
- Parental reflective functioning
- Child social-emotional development

6 Activities (What the programmes deliver)

- 8-weekly, 2-hour group sessions for parents and infants or toddlers.
- Therapeutic discussions addressing stress, relationships, confidence, and emotional wellbeing.
- Modelling of attuned interactions and infant cue reading.
- Psychoeducation on developmental milestone, routines, boundaries, and co-regulation.
- Supported parent-child activities.
- Individualise parent-child video feedback.
- Peer support and group bonding.

7 Outputs (Immediate participation)

- Parents attend weekly sessions.
- Parents feel less isolated and more supported.
- Parents practise new parenting strategies.
- Increased positive parent-child interactions.
- Parents engage in reflective conversations.
- Strengthened informal peer networks.
- Facilitators observe improvements in

8 Short-Term Outcomes (0-6 Months)

Mapped to Mellow Evaluation Framework

Parental Wellbeing

- Improved parental wellbeing.
- Increased confidence and emotional literacy.

Parent-Child Relationship

- More attuned and sensitive parenting.
- Warmer, more positive interactions.

- Increase responsive caregiving.

Reflective Capacity

- Parents better understand child cues, emotions, and behaviour.
- Improved ability to think before reacting.

Child Social-Emotional Development

- Infants (0-18): calmer behaviour, increased secure-base signals.
- Toddlers (19-60): early improvements in emotional regulation.

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Medium-Term Outcomes (6-18 Months)

Mapped to Evaluation Framework

Parental Wellbeing

- Greater coping skills and reduced conflict in the home.

Parent-Child Relationship

- Consistent routines and predictable responses.
- Fewer escalations and improved communication.

Reflective Capacity

- Parents apply strategies independently in daily life.

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Child Social-Emotional Development

- Infants (0-18): stronger attachment patterns.
- Toddlers (19-60): fewer behaviour problems, improved co-regulation and communication.

Long-Term Impacts (18+ Months)

Mapped to Evaluation Framework

Child Development

- Improved emotional, social, and cognitive outcomes.
- Better readiness for nursery and school.

Family Functioning

- More stable, nurturing home environments.
- Increased resilience and reduced intergenerational stress patterns.

System-Level Benefits

- Reduced demand for crisis or statutory intervention
- Stronger early intervention ecosystem supporting community wellbeing.

11 Summary Causal Pathway

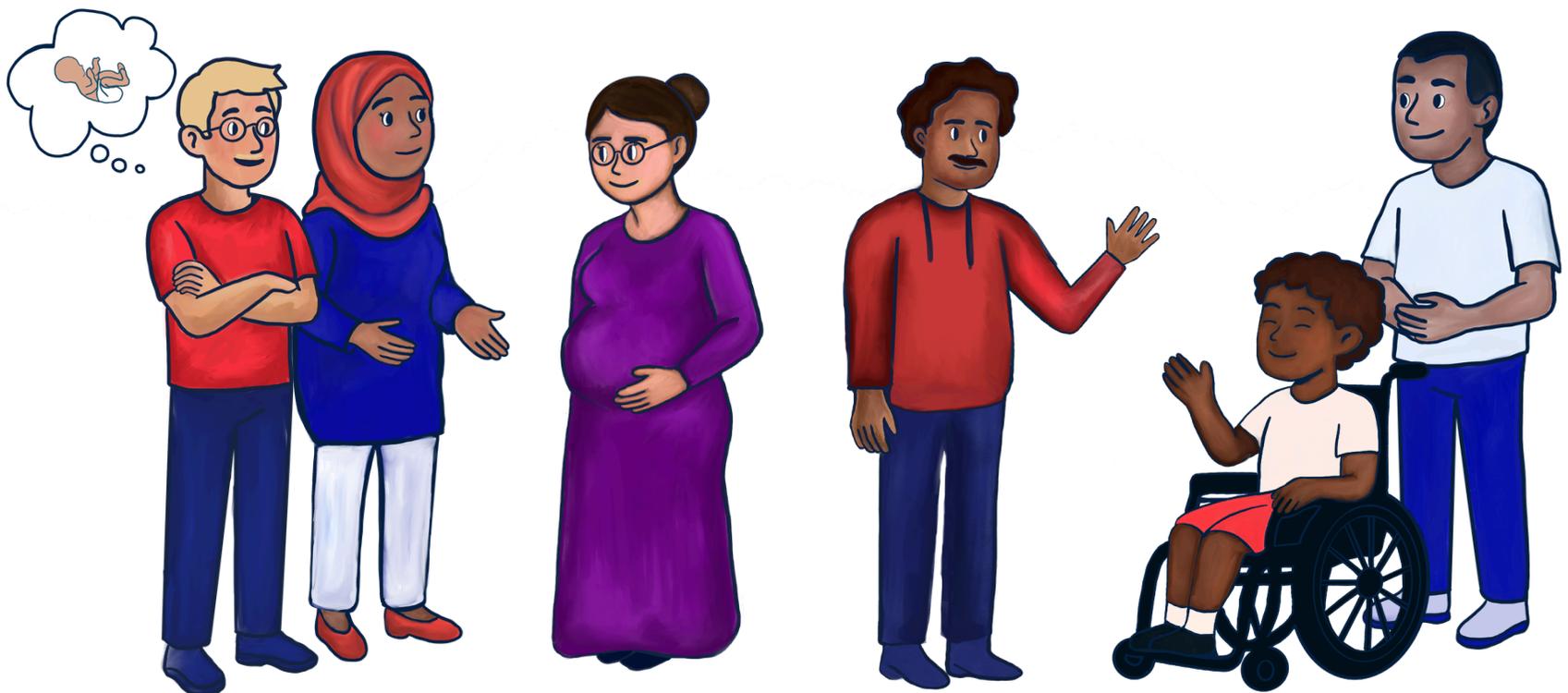
Relationship-based, therapeutic group work:

- Improves parental wellbeing, reflective capacity, and attuned interaction.
- Strengthens attachment, emotional regulation, and behavioural consistency
- Leads to healthier child development, improved family resilience, and long-term positive outcomes.



Mellow

all about relationships



FIND OUT MORE AT
www.mellowparenting.org



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