

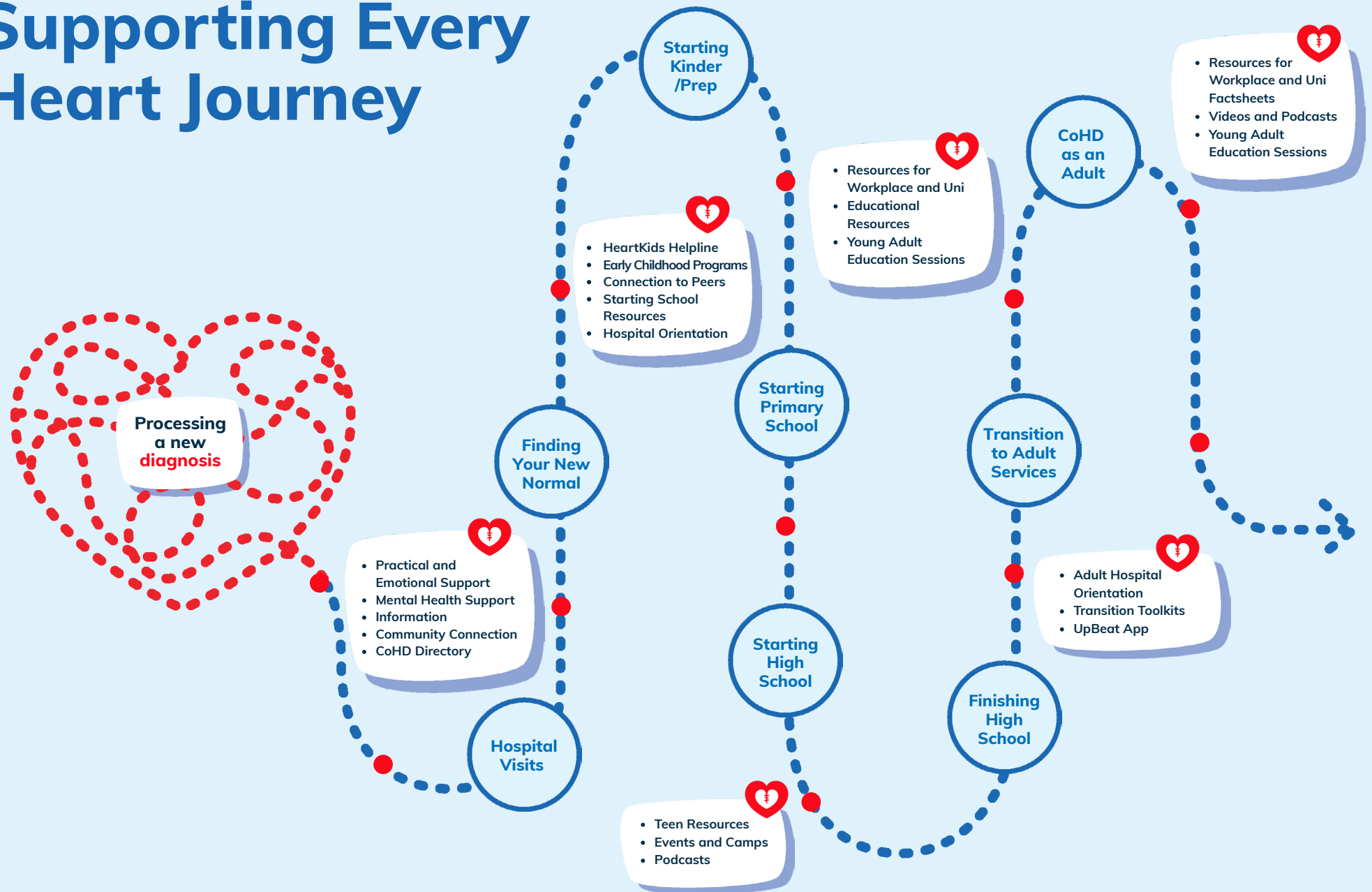


HeartKids



**How *you*
can create
impact for
HeartKids**

Supporting Every Heart Journey



Family support in hospital and community

Challenge:

With only four hospitals in Australia able to perform paediatric open-heart surgery, the 250,000 families navigating life with CoHD often face extended hospital stays far from home.

Program:

HeartKids' Family Support Coordinators work in collaboration with the local paediatric cardiology teams and community organisations to deliver integrated support services that bridge the gap between hospital and community care, strengthening the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of children and their families.



Care and connection

Challenge:

Hospital admissions can be an isolating and lonely time. During these stays parents tell us they often don't eat all day. This is due to cost-of-living pressures exacerbated by long stays away from home.

Program:

Morning teas: HeartKids facilitates connection and peer support morning teas for heart families in the major paediatric hospitals.

Pantry: HeartKids stocks vital items to take the emotional and financial load off already exhausted parents.

Care Bags: HeartKids provide families in hospital with essential practical items, tailored education resources and guidance on navigating the hospital system.



Early support program

Challenge:

50% of babies born with a heart condition will need life-saving surgery. Half of those babies will go on to experience delays in their cognitive, motor, speech and socio-emotional areas.

Program:

HeartKids' Early Childhood Program includes therapeutic playgroups, parental education and capacity building, one on one therapy and early assessment with our occupational therapist and speech therapist.



Teen support program



Challenge:

For Australians aged 13 – 17 years living with a heart condition, life is challenging. As they're forced to transition to adult care, 50% of Australian teens with CoHD become disengaged from the healthcare system.

Program:

HeartKids' Teen Program helps young people to build the resilience and independence they need to manage their unique transition to adulthood with a chronic condition.

Mental health

Challenge:

Approximately 25-50% of parents face psychological distress, particularly soon after children's cardiac surgery (AIHW, 2019) while children and adolescents face medical trauma.

Program:

HeartKids provides access to specialised, trauma-informed counselling and psychology services to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and their families impacted by CoHD.



Helpline

Challenge:

Families impacted by CoHD face unique challenges navigating complex medical journeys that require access to evidence-based information, coordinated referral pathways, specialised guidance and emotional support. These needs are not met through general healthcare channels, creating a gap that the HeartKids Helpline addresses.

Program:

Operating for over a decade, the HeartKids Helpline is a vital, trusted source for specialised information, emotional and practical support, referrals and evidence-based resources for all those impacted by CoHD.





HeartKids

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HeartKids acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work. We acknowledge the continuing connections to land, sea, waters, and skies. HeartKids treads lightly on Country and works to collaborate with and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities impacted by childhood-onset heart disease (CoHD) including rheumatic heart disease (RHD). We pay respects to all Elders past and present and thank the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who contributed to this document. HeartKids recognises the imperative for systemic changes to improve service accessibility and culturally responsive care. Aligned with this vision, we have in 2025 completed our first Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Our RAP is instrumental in guiding us on our reconciliation journey, fostering meaningful engagement and collaboration and strengthening our presence within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities across Australia.