

Evaluation of Kids Plus Therapy Program 2009

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1. Background

The Kids Plus Program recognises the importance of evaluating its service provision at every level. One of its core components is how families perceive the care they and their children receive. The standardised tool – the Measurement of Process of Care or MPOC- has been used in 2006, 2007 and now in 2009 to measure to what extent certain behaviours of the therapists *actually* occurred from the parents' perspective. This tool has been developed by the CanChild Centre for Childhood Disability Research at McMaster University in Canada, and is an internationally recognised and widely published measurement tool used in research into family centred practice. Additional questions were asked of families specifically related to the Kids Plus Therapy Program including questions on the model of service provided, and aspects of therapy and parent support provision.

2: MPOC survey

2.1 The measurement tool.

The Measure of Processes of Care (King, S., Rosenbaum, P. & King, G. 1995, Appendix A) is a rigorously designed measure whereby parents self-report their perceptions of the care that they and their children receive through a service. MPOC is a 56-item questionnaire which is grouped into five scales that reflect separate aspects of care:

- *Enabling and Partnership.* Parents are made to feel as partners; they are given opportunities to make decisions and are treated as the “experts” on their child.
- *Providing General Information.* Parents are given advise on how to get information or contact other parents and given information about available specialist and general services
- *Providing Specific Information about the Child.* Parents given information about child's progress and reasons for therapy approaches are explained

- *Coordinated and Comprehensive Care for the Child and Family.* Parents and professionals plan programs together; the needs of the whole child are considered and sensitivity to family demands in caring for a child with special needs is exercised.
- *Respectful and Supportive Care.* Parents are treated as individuals not just ‘typical’ parents of children with a disability. Professionals provide a caring atmosphere, are non-judgemental; help parents feel competent and provide plenty of time for parents to talk.

“These scales are consistent with those aspects of care reported in the literature as being valued by consumers, and as being related to client satisfaction , adherence to therapy and advice, and/or stress” (MPOC 1995). These factors have been identified as the core features of how family centred a service is. Each question has a value from 1 to 7, with a score of 1 denotes that the parents needs on that scale are “never” met, a score of 4 “sometimes” and a score of 7 “to a great extent”. There is no overall score but a score is averaged for each of the five domains.

The MPOC is valid and reliable measure and has been used extensively in research.

2.2 Sample Size

60 families participating in term 2 2009 Kids Plus program were asked to participate in the survey and 39 families responded, which was a response rate of 65%. This rate can be considered reflective of the participants in the Kids Plus Therapy Program.

2.3 Data Analysis.

Responses to the MPOC were combined into the five domains listed above. The assignment of each of the 56 questions to the five domains is available in the MPOC handbook. The protocol for missing data (such as a question not answered) was followed as per the MPOC handbook.

2.4. Results from MPOC scales

2.4.1 Item by Item Information.

One of the purposes in using the MPOC is to identify areas where improvements could be made and detailed analysis of all the items was undertaken. For each of the 56 items, the percent of parents who indicated that a behaviour “never” to “sometimes” (points 1 to 4 on MPOC’s seven point scale) was calculated as well as the percent who indicated it occurred more than “sometimes” (points 5 to 7 on the response scale). This information is also summarised in Appendix 1. As recommended by the MPOC’s authors, the focus for improvement should be on items where at least 25% to 33% of parents reported that the behaviour occurred “sometimes or less” as represented by the cell that is highlighted in red. There was only one item out of 56 that was highlighted as being in need of improvement under ‘Providing general information’ – the item asks does your service provider “have information about your child’s disability (e.g. its causes, how it progresses future outlook)”

Items where 85% or more of families reported the behaviour occurring “more than sometimes” have been highlighted as examples of good practice in blue. 48 out of 56 items were scored in this category of good practice and only one of the remaining 8 items needed improvement (see above)

3. Family Survey

This survey was devised to specifically ask families about aspects of their experience and involvement of the Kids Plus Therapy Program. There were 40 items (Appendix 2) with the % scores tabled.

In profiling the KPF population, 25% of clients were less than one year old when they commenced, reflecting a shift in early referrals, and 76% were less than 3 years old. Paediatricians are still the main referral source. Parents identified that weekly individual therapy and the skills of the therapy team were key factors for them choosing to come to KPF. Parents preferred weekly therapy (89%) and

were happy to travel to a centre if they needed to, in order to access this (92%). Goal focused therapy (97%) and collaborative partnerships with therapists (100%) were also key indicators for parents in this program and 97% of parents recognised that their child was progressing with their therapy goals. Parents also recognised that the KPF program was unique service not provided by other organisations in terms of intensity, regularity and quality of therapy program (82%). Specific questions were asked about parent support, as this was an area of service provision commenced in the past year. Information about KPF and other services was accessed by 95% of families, and many would like to attend information sessions and social functions with other parents (87%). Several topics for information sessions were given by parents. All the additional comments that parents made about their experience with the Kids Plus Therapy Program are documented in Appendix C.

4. Discussion

4.1 MPOC

From the data in Appendix A, the strengths of the KPF are clearly identified, with the scales measuring ‘*Enabling and Partnership*’, ‘*Coordinated and Comprehensive Care for the Child and Family*’, ‘*Respectful and Supportive Care*’ and ‘*Providing Specific Information about the Child*’ identified by parents as present” to a great extent” in the Kids Plus program. These scale scores demonstrate from a parent’s perspective how highly they value the service they are receiving through the Kids Plus Foundation and reflects the high standard of practice delivered by the KPF team members. An item by item analysis of the 56 items in the MPOC showed that families scored 86% of the items as occurring within the range of best family-centred practice. Importantly, items around *Provision of General Information* have shown significant changes compared to the last evaluation done in 2007, with items improving from between 11% - 48%. As part of the evaluation in 2007, it was recognised that this area of family centre practice was not being provided by the Kids Plus Therapy Program and that there was clearly a need for families to have access to family service coordination to ensure that this aspect of their early intervention service is met. Consequently, the position of Parent Support Worker was created with a grant from the Portland House Foundation and the John T Reid Charitable Trusts. The significant changes

that the 2009 MPOC has highlighted demonstrate the value of such a service within the KPF program, and in particular the contribution of Bron Lawson in assuming this role and developing it over the past two years.

4.2 Family survey

From the data in Appendix B, the family survey highlights that parents are choosing to participate in KPF because of the type of program that it is, i.e., a high quality, intensive, goal based therapy program that also provides information and support to parents and families. Paediatricians remain the main referral base; however, it would appear that babies are being referred earlier, reflecting that KPF now offers a service for monitoring babies who have been identified for being at risk developmentally , such as extremely low birth weight babies with know IVH or PVL.

5. Conclusion

The MPOC questionnaire is the benchmark for measuring how family centred a service is. Families' perceptions of the Kids Plus therapy program as measured by the MPOC showed that families rated very highly the service that they were receiving from the Kids Plus therapy program. Of note are the significant improvements in the scale of *Provision of General Information*, related to the implementation of the recommendations of the last MPOC in 2007 for the provision of family service coordination within the KPF program. This area will continue to be developed, and in particular the area of providing specific information about a child's disabilities, its cause, progression and future outlook will be addressed.

The family survey confirms that KPF continues to provide a bench mark service for families who choose a model of intensive goal directed therapy.

Appendix A. List of Items by domain for MPOC and item by item scoring - 2009				
Item by Item Information on each Scale Item				
	<i>ENABLING AND PARTNERSHIP</i>	% responding “more than sometimes “**	% responding “sometimes or less”***	% responding N/A
2	fully explain treatment choices to you?	82%	13%	
3	offer you positive feedback or encouragement (e.g., in carrying out a home program)?	95%	3%	2%
8	tell you about options for treatment or services for your child (e.g., equipment, school, therapy)?	87%	10%	3%
12	trust you as the "expert" on your child?	95%	5%	
15	anticipate your concerns by offering information even before you ask?	85%	15%	
16	make sure you have a chance during visits to the centre to say what is important to you?	95%	5%	
17	let you choose when to receive information and the type of information you want?	92%	5%	3
19	tell you about the reasons for treatment or equipment?	95%	5%	
22	provide opportunities for you to make decisions about treatment?	100%	0%	
23	answer your questions completely?	100%	0%	
25	recognize that your family has the final say when making decisions about your child's treatment?	97%	3%	
28	consult with you when discussing equipment or services?	92%	3%	5
30	tell you details about your child's services, such as the reasons for them, the type of therapies and the length of time?	85%	13%	3
35	make sure you have opportunities to explain what you think are important treatment goals?	95%	2%	3
36	make you feel like a partner in your child's care?	95%	2%	3
43	listen to what you have to say about your child's needs for equipment, services, etc.?	97%	0%	3

	<i>PROVIDING GENERAL INFORMATION</i>	% responding “more than sometimes “*		% responding “sometimes or less”**	% not responding N/A
		2009	2007		
46	have information available to you in various forms, such as a booklet, kit, video, etc.?	87%	86%	10%	3
48	give you information about the types of services offered at the Centre or in your community?	92%	81%	8%	
49	promote family-to-family gatherings for social, informational or shared experiences?	92%	44%	8%	
50	provide opportunities for special guests to speak to parents on topics of interest?	97%	24%	0%	3
51	provide support to help cope with the impact of childhood disability (e.g., by advocating on your behalf or informing you of assistance programs)?	87%	65%	10%	3
53	have information available about your child's disability (e.g., its causes, how it progresses, future outlook)?	62%	46%	26%	12
54	provide advice on how to get information or to contact other parents (e.g., Center's parent resource library)?	72%	31%	23%	5
55	provide opportunities for the entire family to obtain information?	67%	44%	23%	10
56	have general information available about different concerns (e.g., financial costs or assistance, genetic counselling, dating and sexuality)?	69%	39%	18%	13
	<i>PROVIDING SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD</i>				
24	explain what they are doing when you are watching your child in therapy?	97%		3%	
26	tell you about the results from assessments?	85%		7%	8
27	provide you with written information about what your child is doing in therapy?	77%		18%	5
39	provide you with written information about your child's progress?	87%		10%	3
52	notify you about the reasons for upcoming case conferences, meetings, etc. about your child?	62%		8%	30

<i>COORDINATED AND COMPREHENSIVE CARE</i>		% responding “more than sometimes “*	% responding “sometimes or less”**	% responding not applicable
1	suggest therapy plans that fit with your family's needs & lifestyle?	85%	13%	2
4	explain things to your child in a way that your child understands?	79%	3%	18
5	take the time to establish rapport with you or your child when changes occur	97%	0%	3
6	discuss with you everyone's expectations for your child, so that all agree on what is best?	90%	10%	
7	make sure that your child's skills are known to all persons working with your child, so the skills are carried across services and service providers?	85%	10%	
10	provide ideas to help you work with the health care "system"?	72%	21%	7
11	recognize the demands of caring for a child with special needs?	97%	3%	
13	look at the needs of your child (e.g., at mental, emotional, and social needs) instead of just at physical needs	90%	10%	
14	show sensitivity to your family's feelings about having a child with special needs (e.g., your worries about your child's health or function)?	92%	8%	
20	follow up at the next appointment on any concerns you discussed at the previous one?	100%	0%	
21	make sure that at least one team member is someone who works with you and your family over a long period of time?	100%	0%	
32	develop both short-term and long-term goals for your child?	92%	5%	3
34	plan together so they are all working in the same direction?	92%	5%	3
37	make sure you are informed ahead of time about any changes in your child's care (e.g., therapists, programs, equipment)?	95%	3%	2
40	seem aware of your child's changing needs as he/she grows?	95%	5%	
44	make themselves available to you as a resource (e.g., emotional support, advocacy, information)?	97%	3%	
45	give you information about your child that is consistent from person to person?	97%	0%	3

<i>RESPECTFUL AND SUPPORTIVE CARE</i>				
9	accept you and your family in a non judgmental way?	100%	0%	
18	remember personal details about your child or family when speaking with you?	92%	8%	
29	provide a caring atmosphere rather than just give you information?	100%	0%	
31	treat you as an individual rather than as a "typical" parent of a child with a disability?	97%	3%	
33	treat you as an equal rather than just as the parent of a patient (e.g., by not referring to you as "Mum" or "Dad")?	98%	2%	
38	help you to feel competent as a parent?	92%	3%	5
41	provide enough time to talk so you don't feel rushed?	100%	0%	
42	treat you and your family as people rather than as a "case" (e.g., by not referring to you by diagnosis, such as "the spastic diplegic")?	97%	0%	3
47	have support staff that are polite and courteous to you and your family?	100%	0%	

*This percentage includes responses with values of 5-7 on the seven point scale

** This percentage includes responses with values of 1-4 on the seven point scale

Appendix B: Family Survey of the Kids Plus Therapy Program N=39

<i>How do you agree with these statements?</i>						
1. We are happy to travel to the therapy centre for Kids Plus	Highly Agree 72%	Agree 20%	Neutral 3%	Disagree 5%	Highly Disagree	Does not apply
2. We would prefer less frequent therapy (e.g. only 2-3 times per term) for my child if it was at home, kinder or school.	Highly Agree 5%	Agree 8%	Neutral 18%	Disagree 26%	Highly Disagree 44%	Does not apply 3%
3. Weekly (or regular) individual therapy sessions are a high priority for my child's wellbeing and development	Highly Agree 79%	Agree 10%	Neutral 5%	Disagree 5%	Highly Disagree	Does not apply
4. Goal focused therapy is important for my child's wellbeing and development	Highly Agree 74%	Agree 23%	Neutral 3%	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Does not apply
5. My child can access weekly, high quality, regular individual therapy that meets the specific therapy needs of my child, from other organisations	Highly Agree 0%	Agree 10%	Neutral 5%	Disagree 31%	Highly Disagree 51%	Does not apply 3%
6. Kids Plus offers me choice of session times and accommodates my requests	Highly Agree 74%	Agree 20%	Neutral 5%	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Does not apply
7. The therapy sessions generally start and end on time	Highly Agree 38%	Agree 62%	Neutral	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Does not apply
8. The therapy session is enough to cover everything we would like each week	Highly Agree 54%	Agree 33%	Neutral 8%	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Does not apply 3%
9. Your therapist(s) has the required skills and knowledge to meet the therapy needs of your child and your family	Highly Agree 85%	Agree 13%	Neutral 3%	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Does not apply
10. Weekly sessions provide the consistency, support and expertise required to assist my child to reach their goals	Highly Agree 72%	Agree 13%	Neutral 3%	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Does not apply 5%
11. Your therapist(s) have developed realistic goals each program collaboratively with your family and your child	Highly Agree 77%	Agree 20%	Neutral 3%	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Does not apply 3%
12. We feel involved as partners with the therapists, in the Therapy Program	Highly Agree 82%	Agree 20%	Neutral	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Does not apply
13. My child has achieved or is progressing with their therapy goals in the Therapy Program	Highly Agree 51%	Agree 46%	Neutral	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Does not apply 3%
14. Kids Plus Therapy Program provides a different service to other services that my child has received	Highly Agree 60%	Agree 20%	Neutral 8%	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Does not apply 13%

Information and Connecting						
15. My child's Kids Plus therapists works in with other service providers such as SCOPE, Noah's Ark, Yooralla, Specialist Children's Services, Barwon Valley School and kindergarten / school staff	Highly Agree 44%	Agree 38%	Neutral 8%	Disagree	Highly Disagree	Does not apply 8%

To what extent do your therapists and Kids+ staff						
16. Make sure you understand your child's abilities and limitations, their strengths and needs	To a very great extent 51%	To a fairly great extent 46%	To a moderate extent 3%	To a small extent	To a very small extent	Does not apply
17. Gives you confidence on how best to work helping your child's progress.	To a very great extent 75%	To a fairly great extent 25%	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	To a very small extent	Does not apply
18. Offer support	To a very great extent 75%	To a fairly great extent 25%	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	To a very small extent	Does not apply
19. Offer interactions with other parents attending the program as appropriate	To a very great extent 23%	To a fairly great extent 38%	To a moderate extent 25%	To a small extent 5%	To a very small extent 3%	Does not apply 8%
20. Explain the importance of setting functional goals for your child and assist you in doing this in a collaborative way	To a very great extent 64%	To a fairly great extent 28%	To a moderate extent 3%	To a small extent 5%	To a very small extent	Does not apply 3%
21. Gives you ideas on techniques and strategies for home based practice and the confidence to implement these	To a very great extent 66%	To a fairly great extent 25%	To a moderate extent 8%	To a small extent	To a very small extent	Does not apply
22. Your therapist(s) provide techniques and strategies for home based practice	To a very great extent 69%	To a fairly great extent 25%	To a moderate extent 5%	To a small extent	To a very small extent	Does not apply
23. Helps you in negotiating and advocating for your child's need with other services within the disability sector	To a very great extent 49%	To a fairly great extent 20%	To a moderate extent 10%	To a small extent 8%	To a very small extent 3%	Does not apply 10%

24. When I commenced at Kids Plus, the parent support worker provided useful information about Kids Plus and other services I could access (<i>this is only applicable if you commenced after Term 1 2008</i>)	To a very great extent 90% (There are 14 families in this category)	To a fairly great extent 5%	To a moderate extent 5%	To a small extent	To a very small extent	Does not apply 62%
25. I have been given invitations for information sessions from Kids Plus	To a very great extent 98%	To a fairly great extent 2%	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	To a very small extent	Does not apply
26. I would like to attend information sessions	To a very great extent 31%	To a fairly great extent 31%	To a moderate extent 26%	To a small extent 10%	To a very small extent	Does not apply 3%
27. I appreciate the opportunity to socialise with other Kids Plus families through eg, parent dinners, kids' activities.	To a very great extent 33%	To a fairly great extent 41%	To a moderate extent 13%	To a small extent 8%	To a very small extent 3%	Does not apply 3%
28. I would like the opportunity to attend more social functions with Kids Plus families.	To a very great extent 13%	To a fairly great extent 49%	To a moderate extent 25%	To a small extent 5%	To a very small extent 5%	Does not apply 3%
<i>Parent support</i>						
29. I would prefer to receive information about relevant parent information workshops by (number 1-4 in order of preference)	Post (1) 16 (2) 12 (3) 3 (4) 3	Email (1) 18 (2) 12 (3) 6 (4) 1	Website forum (1) 0 (2) 2 (3) 6 (4) 25	Discussion with therapist (1) 4 (2) 7 (3) 17 (4) 6		
30. I would most likely attend a relevant information workshop if it was held on: (number 1-4 in order of preference)	Monday –Friday daytime (1) 9 (2) 7 (3) 7 (4) 10	Monday – Thursday evening (1) 19 (2) 7 (3) 5 (4) 2	Saturday – Sunday daytime (1) 7 (2) 9 (3) 12 (4) 5	Friday – Sunday evening (1) 0 (2) 8 (3) 8 (4) 16		
31. I would like to attend information sessions at Kids+	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes 76%		No 5% not specified 19%			

32. The following topics interest me (numbered in order of preference)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Botox 2. Epilepsy 3. Funding for equipment and resources 4. Cerebral Palsy 5. Nutrition 6. Respiratory Health 7. Caring for my back 8. Vision 	<p>Other topics included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ AAC and programming ideas ▪ Constipation ▪ Siblings ▪ Parent Support networks ▪ Life skills fro children with CP ▪ Feeding difficulties and reflux ▪ Interaction and play ▪ Parents resources ▪ Behavioural management ▪ Research in area of CP ▪ Speech Therapy ▪ Kinder/school funding ▪ Research non surgical options

Appendix C: Parent's comments

Kids Plus Foundation is without doubt the single most valuable organisation we have been involved with. The therapy is outstanding, the info sessions lately have been great, and the fun activities provided just awesome! I and my family wouldn't change a thing. Thank you.

Kids Plus staff are always there to provide support and are aware that changes (e.g., transition time from kinder to school) are always difficult times. The therapy we can access through Kids Plus is so important, as therapy we receive from other services isn't frequent enough. Thankyou soooo much to all the team at Kids Plus – you make our family smile. ☺

Kids Plus is a fantastic especially..... who communicates, understands and handles (our daughter) with a lot of patience. Kids Plus makes you feel at home and comfortable and without them I really don't know what I'd do. So thanks everyone for everything you do.

Kids Plus has been instrumental in the physical development of our child. She had achieved so much through the therapy sessions. She is keen to come to therapy sessions which can be attributed to the friendly and fun therapists. A BIG thank you to all the team at Kids Plus!

We love Kids Plus and everyone has been fantastic to our family

Kids Plus is a wonderful service that has certainly enhanced our child's quality of life and reaching her optimal (potential). The therapists are skilled and present a caring natural character. I have gained knowledge from the information sessions and (my daughter) can also identify how the services have included her in the goal setting and helping her to achieve her desired goals. Thankyou Kids Plus and staff. Parent Support Officer very informative, organised, fantastic family days and connected to other services available.

I know the therapists have enough to do but I think it would be a great idea to involve siblings in the therapies and exercises somehow by laying games that they would do at home etc... play together while doing therapy at the same time.

Thank you for an amazing place to come for therapy. Not only do we get great therapy but friendly advice and when needed a shoulder for Mum to cry on. Thank you so much.

I still think that the whole team at Kids Plus are the best in Geelong and wouldn't be where we are today without them.

Kids Plus is a fabulous programme, very accommodating and flexible for sessions for my child.

Would like to say the biggest thank you for all the support from Kids Plus particularly (therapy, admin and parent support). I know we are just at the beginning of the journey but I am not sure where we would be without you all. I just wanted to mention that a lot of my answers to the survey were based on the fact that we haven't quite got onto the full "Kids plus programme because our daughter has been seeing the therapist on an ad hoc basis to get treatment started before a regular place became available. We are most appreciative and look forward to the weekly sessions with the goal focus. We are still on the waiting list for the intervention services but are working with Vision Australia already. You guys are amazing and we look forward to an ongoing relationship and hopefully being able to give something back to the program.

Kids Plus has been a great help to me and my child. I feel extremely welcome when walking through the front door and are always greeted with a smile. Kids Plus just seems to understand and that is the hardest thing about caring for a child with special needs. Thanks Kids Plus.

Our family is so grateful to the Kids Plus team for providing consistent therapy which is balanced. We appreciated any therapy we get, whether it is speech, Occupational therapy or physiotherapy. Having therapy is the key to cerebral palsy children being able to succeed. Life is hard but Kids Plus makes it a little bit easier. Thank you! Maybe as our children get older, it would be good to teach them some life skills or have a group session with similar children and disabilities and their parents. Not every week, maybe once term or a couple of times a year.

Kids Plus is a fantastic therapy program and we're very fortunate to be a part of it in Geelong

Just thank you for such a great program and for helping us care for (our daughter). Kids Plus is amazing.

'Sometimes week to week therapy can be a bit of a burden for parents' despite the benefits to the child. Bimonthly sessions or 4-5/term might be a good option for those terms where there is a lot of other appointments occurring.

I'd be interested in attending an information session if there was a counsellor conducting either a one off session or a short weekly program @Kids Plus or giving advice on accessing counselling through PASS. My child's physical needs are not severe and are improving but his medical problems are intense and very rare. I feel that most of the info sessions offered to date haven't been that relevant to us. Everything else has been fantastic. Thanks

I cannot fault any of the staff we've encountered at Kids Plus. The (administrative staff) is always helpful, following up things for us and always appears cheerful. The therapists are all so patient with my child, who most times, is not a willing participant! Most therapy sessions ends up with me embarrassed about my child's behaviour, and the therapists telling me we've made some headway...so positive (just what's needed). My only criticism would be space. I know the new rooms and (outdoor therapy space) are an improvement but my child is easily distracted and disruptive (to the other family) when we share a room. Not a bad critic. Overall, we're

extremely happy with Kids Plus and the amazing job they continue to do with our child. KEEP IT UP! Oh, and THANK YOU!

Apart from the painting weekend workshop not really had much contact with other families but with a busy week I am quite happy with this. Sometimes I really want to connect with others and sometimes I really want to keep to ourselves as a family unit... so I don't think it is really a negative to not have a lot of opportunities to mix with other families esp. if we don't feel the need. I had wondered if a family / play group came together regularly that is might be nice but just a thought.

Very happy with consistency if therapists visits to school, and how well they work with school staff. Both therapists always thinking ahead or pre-empting child's needs or next "hurdle"! Support staff at office always courteous, enthusiastic and professional – while making you feel at ease.