Victorian early childhood intervention standards

2016

VICTORIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION STANDARDS

# **BACKGROUND**

The *Victorian Early Childhood Intervention Standards 2016* (ECI Standards) support funded early childhood intervention providers to understand the Victorian Government’s expectations in regard to the quality of service delivery for young children with disability or developmental delay and their families.

The ECI Standards reflect the early intervention outcomes for young children with disabilities or developmental delays and their families, and are underpinned by the key principle of family centred practice. They recognise that the foundation of effective early childhood intervention is based on national and international evidence based research.

All service providers funded by the department to deliver in-scope services (ECIS project code 718360) are required to meet the Standards. The Standards consist of four service delivery standards and an organisational performance standard.

The title of each Standard indicates the main focus and the accompanying statements summarise the goal of each standard. The criteria describe the key components that make up the standard.

# **RELATIONSHIP TO THE SERVICE AGREEMENT AND VICTORIAN ECIS GUIDE**

The Department’s *Programs and Services Guide* and the Service Agreement list the *Specialist Children’s Services Program Standards 1998* under the relevant standards and guidelines sections. The ECI Standards replace the *Specialist Children’s Services Program Standards (1998).*

The ECI Standards are primarily a quality improvement tool. The Department must ensure services purchased for consumers are of a high quality, are effective and reflect the needs of consumers.

When services implement the ECI Standards they set in place the framework that will guide continuous quality improvement in their organisation. The Department through accountability processes such as service agreements will assist services to achieve the Standards through a process of monitoring and support.

It is important that all organisations adopt a team approach that assists the service to meet the Standards through:

* their documentation
* the knowledge and awareness of their governing bodies, management, service delivery staff and users
* ongoing monitoring and evaluation practices.

OVERVIEW OF THE ECI STANDARDS

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|  | **Standard** |  | **Criterion** |
| 1 | **Family centred practice***Families can expect to be involved in a respectful, collaborative working partnership with service providers* | 1.1 | Service delivery is underpinned by family centred and strength based practices |
| 1.2 | Families have a goal-oriented and outcomes focussed family service and support plan |
| 2 | **Access and engagement***Children and families have access to services appropriate to their needs without being disadvantaged by their cultural, financial or geographic situation* | 2.1 | Children and families have access to services relevant to their needs |
| 2.2 | The service is responsive to the diversity of children and families  |
| 2.3 | The service establishes linkages with other services to support a coordinated approach for children and families |
| 3 | **Outcomes for children and families***Service delivery focuses on functional outcomes for children and families that support the achievement of their goals* | 3.1 | Service delivery enhances children’s learning, wellbeing and development  |
| 3.2 | The service builds the capacity of families to support their child’s learning, wellbeing and development |
| 4 | **Inclusion and participation***The inclusion and participation of children in everyday family and community life is promoted* | 4.1 | The service promotes the inclusion and participation of children in family and community life |
| 4.2 | The service assists early childhood education and care settings to support the inclusion and participation of all children |
| 5 | **Organisational performance***Sound governance and management guides quality service delivery* | 5.1 | The service has effective governance and management processes to deliver high quality services |
| 5.2 | The service has effective risk management policies and processes to manage client issues, human resources and the sustainability of services |
| 5.3 | The service manages human resources to ensure that appropriately skilled and trained staff are available to safely provide services to clients |
| 5.4 | The service has effective information systems to sensitively manage client information, improve services and meet identified client needs |

# **INDICATORS**

In addition to the standards and criteria, indicators have been developed to assist services to understand and implement the Standards across their organisation.

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| **Standard 1: Family Centred Practice** |
| *Families can expect to be involved in a respectful, collaborative working partnership with service providers* |
| Criterion 1.1 Service delivery is underpinned by family centred and strength based practices |
| Indicators* ECI professionals understand and implement the principles of family centred and strength based practice
* ECI professionals recognise and respect the central role of families in children’s lives
* Families are provided with objective information about the service and what level of service will be provided
* ECI professionals provide relevant information to enable families to make informed choices and decisions
* ECI professionals recognise, and incorporate in their work, families’ understanding of their child’s strengths, interests and needs
* ECI supports are individualised to reflect the unique strengths and needs of each child
* Family members and professionals work together and share information routinely and collaboratively to achieve family identified outcomes
* Information is provided in an accessible format about: the quality of service families can expect to receive from the service provider; their right to an advocate, including how to access one; their right to privacy and confidentiality; the process for accessing records; feedback processes; complaints process and this information is provided on entry to the service
* The service provides families with information to support their linkages with other local specialist and universal services relevant to their child and family’s needs
* Families have an opportunity to provide information and feedback on all aspects of the services they are receiving
* Family feedback information is documented and informs the service’s annual planning and review process
* The service maintains a record of all complaints and their outcomes
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| **STANDARD 1: Family centred practice** |
| *Families can expect to be involved in a respectful, collaborative working partnership with service providers* |
| Criterion 1.2 Families have a goal-oriented and outcomes focussed family service and support plan |
| Indicators* Families actively participate in the planning and development of a Family Service Support Plan
* All plans are individualised to respond to the identified needs of the child and family
* All families have a documented plan(s) that:
* Reflects the strengths, needs, goals, supports and outcomes specified by the family
* Describes how these goals will be achieved, including timelines
* Includes input from family, carers and other service providers, as appropriate
* Is reviewed within timeframes agreed with the family to reflect changing needs
* The plan reflects the shared ideas, skills and knowledge of families and professionals
* The plan promotes interactions and activities that enhance the child’s competencies and development and is underpinned by the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
* Families receive a copy of their plan and any revised plans in a format that they can understand
* The service supports families to be actively involved in monitoring and reviewing the plan
* The outcomes of the goals in the plan are measured and reported in ways that are meaningful to the family
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| **Standard 2: Access and engagement** |
| *Children and families have access to services appropriate to their needs without being disadvantaged by their cultural, financial or geographic situation* |
| Criterion 2.1 Children and families have access to a service relevant to their needs |
| Indicators* The service creates an inclusive and welcoming environment where all families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to their child’s learning and development
* Service delivery hours are responsive to the needs of children and families accessing the service
* Policies and processes are in place which document eligibility, priority of access and demand management
* Information is provided to families in an accessible format that facilitates understanding regarding: entry and exit processes; criteria to determine priority for service; conditions that may apply to services being provided; any fees or costs, as applicable
* Data and feedback mechanisms are in place to identify and address barriers to access
* The service identifies service accessibility issues and implements strategies to address these
* The service enables access for families living in geographically isolated areas
* The service implements the *Child Safe Standards 2015*
* The service environment uses resources and symbols that are responsive to the needs of all families
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| **Standard 2: Access and engagement** |
| *Children and families have access to services appropriate to their needs without being disadvantaged by their cultural, financial or geographic situation* |
| Criterion 2.2 The service is responsive to the diversity of children and families |
| Indicators* The service provides culturally respectful and responsive services which respect the diversity of families, including vulnerable families, families who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background and those who are from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds
* The service adopts active engagement strategies
* The service demonstrates a cohesive and holistic approach to planning and implementing programs for children and their families
* Families and professionals work together as a collaborative team to achieve common goals
* An ECI practitioner undertakes the role of key worker to be the family’s main point of contact and main person working with the family
* The key worker is supported by a transdisciplinary team of relevant professionals who form a collaborative team
* Interpreters are used, as required, to support more effective communication
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| **Standard 2: Access and engagement** |
| *Children and families have access to services appropriate to their needs without being disadvantaged by their cultural, financial or geographic situation* |
| Criterion 2.3 The service establishes linkages with other services to support a coordinated approach for children and families |
| Indicators* The service strives to achieve greater coordination for families within and between specialist and universal services
* The service maintains links with other specialist and universal services in the area ensuring current knowledge of these services and a complementary approach to service delivery
* The service provides or directs families to information on other local specialist and universal services which may be able to meet their needs
* The service collaborates with other services to enhance transition/exit planning to meet the needs of the child and family
* The service has documented processes for transition arrangements (to school, disability services, universalist services), case closure and this information is communicated to families
* The service provider is visible and active in referral networks with clear referral pathways to relevant universal and specialist services
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| **Standard 3: Outcomes for children and families** |
| *Service delivery focuses on functional outcomes for children and families that support the achievement of their goals* |
| Criterion 3.1 Service delivery enhances children’s learning, wellbeing and development |
| Indicators* Program goals reflect functional outcomes relevant to the child’s access and meaningful participation in their everyday settings
* The service supports families to identify and build on a child’s strengths interests and capabilities
* Goals and strategies focus on functional outcomes that support children’s learning, development and wellbeing and are appropriate to their development and cultural circumstances
* Assessment of children’s development is authentic and holistic and includes collaboration with families and other professionals as well as the child’s functionality in their everyday routines and activities
* The service promotes and supports children’s participation in daily routines, at home, in the community, and in early childhood settings
* The service promotes and supports the learning and development opportunities alongside peers in everyday community settings e.g. play group, kindergarten
* Flexibility of service delivery allows for interventions to take place in environments that are responsive to the family situation
* Service delivery is informed by the outcomes and practice principles identified in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)
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| **STANDARD 3: Outcomes for children and families** |
| *Service delivery focuses on functional outcomes for children and families that support the achievement of their goals* |
| Criterion 3.2 Services build the capacity of families to support their child’s learning, wellbeing and development |
| Indicators* ECI professionals build the knowledge, skills and abilities of the individuals who will spend the most time with the child in order to maximise the learning and development opportunities in their everyday life
* ECI professionals assist families to understand how their family routines and everyday activities can support their child’s development
* Interventions build on family support and resources assisting them to strengthen formal and informal supports to match their needs and interests
* Goals are able to be integrated into the child and family’s daily routine and in other settings within which the child participates
* ECI professionals link families with local community resources which may meaningfully meet their needs
* Decisions on equipment requirements are made in consideration of the family, home and community settings
* Families are satisfied with the support they receive to achieve stated goals
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| **Standard 4: Inclusion and participation** |
| *The inclusion and participation of children in everyday family and community life is promoted* |
| Criterion 4.1 Services promote the inclusion and participation of children in family and community life |
| Indicators* The service promotes the child’s access and participation in family and community life
* Goals and strategies focus on building the child’s capacity to meaningfully participate in naturally occurring, developmentally appropriate activities with families and peers
* Wherever possible, intervention supports are provided within the family setting, building family confidence to implement these strategies in their everyday life
* The service has clearly documented policies and processes that acknowledge and support the rights of children with disabilities and their families to access and participate in their community
* The service supports every child, regardless of their needs, to fully participate in family and community life
* The service promotes and supports the learning and development opportunities alongside peers in everyday community settings e.g. play group, kindergarten
* The service provides families with information, in a format that is understood to enhance informed decision making and choice
* The service supports families to develop the skills and confidence to be their child’s ongoing advocate
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| **Standard 4: Inclusion and participation** |
| *The inclusion and participation of children in everyday family and community life is promoted* |
| Criterion 4.2 The service assists early childhood education and care settings to support the inclusion and participation of all children  |
| Indicators* ECI professionals are available to support children within other early childhood settings
* The key worker acts as the main contact between the client ECI service and the early childhood education and care setting
* The service provides families with resources and information to support their participation in early childhood education and care settings
* ECI professionals respect and collaborate with early childhood education and care professionals to facilitate sharing of knowledge and understanding of the child
* ECI professionals support early childhood education and care professionals to identify and implement strategies and adaptations that assist the child’s inclusion in the learning and development opportunities offered in the early childhood education and care program
* The ECI service provides families and early childhood education and care staff with information and support to promote the smooth transition of children from home to early childhood education and care, between early childhood education and care settings and onto school
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| **Standard 5: Organisational Performance** |
| *Sound governance and management guides quality service delivery* |
| Criterion 5.1: The service has effective governance and management processes to deliver high quality services |
| Indicators* The service’s governance and management processes are effective and transparent and there are clear management and staff accountabilities
* The service’s strategic and annual planning informs the delivery of services to improve outcomes for children and families accessing services
* The service effectively meets its legal obligations and contract management requirements
* The service works actively with children and their families and other external stakeholders to improve the quality of its services
* The governing body possess the skills, knowledge and experience required to fulfil their role
* The service has robust financial management systems in place
* The service has robust legislative compliance systems in place
* The service has a continuous quality improvement system in place
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| **Standard 5: Organisational Performance** |
| *Sound governance and management guides quality service delivery* |
| Criteria 5.2: The service has effective risk management policies and processes to manage client issues, human resources and the sustainability of services |
| Indicators* The service has an effective risk management plan that meets policy requirements
* The service complies with relevant accountancy standards
* The service has an active workplace health and safety policy and process
* The service’s insurance policies are maintained
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| **Standard 5: Organisational Performance** |
| *Sound governance and management guides quality service delivery* |
| Criteria 5.3: The service manages human resources to ensure that appropriately skilled and trained staff are available to safely provide services to clients |
| Indicators* The service’s recruitment processes ensure that staff, carers and volunteers provide safe and high quality services to children and families accessing services
* The service has a thorough process for pre-employment criminal history and referee checks and ensuring the currency of staff Working With Children checks
* The service employs staff with appropriate discipline tertiary qualifications, who are registered with their regulatory body where appropriate, and either hold or are eligible for membership of their professional association
* The service’s recruitment, supervision, training and development processes support staff to respond to the diversity of families, including vulnerable families, families who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background and those who are from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds
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| **Standard 5: Organisational Performance** |
| *Sound governance and management guides quality service delivery* |
| Criteria 5.4: The service has effective information systems to sensitively manage client information, improve services and meet identified client needs |
| Indicators* The service sensitively manages client information and maintains client privacy and confidentiality in line with legislative requirements
* Client information is retained and disposed of appropriately and sensitively
* Information is provided to families in ways that are accessible to families seeking information
* The service has an effective information management system in place which is easily accessible to staff to support planning and service delivery
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# **Further information and support**

The Department of Education and Training website has further information regarding Early Childhood Intervention Services via the following link:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/needs/Pages/ecis.aspx>