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|  | Flexible Support PackagesFact sheet for families |
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What are Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) Flexible Support Packages (FSP)?

ECIS FSP provides short-term assistance to families who have a child with a disability or developmental delay and require support to meet the child’s current needs.

ECIS FSP aim to support families while they build capacity to provide for the ongoing learning, development and wellbeing of their child.

What type of supports can ECIS Flexible Support Packages fund?

There are three categories for funding under ECIS FSP.

These are:

* Category 1 – Safety risk: physical or psychological

This category provides supports to children who are at risk of harm to themselves or to others around them. Depending on the child’s needs, supports might include safety glass, home modifications or respite from a disability support service.

* Category 2 – Independence, mobility and functionality

This category supports children to participate in family and community life through aiding their independence and mobility. Some things that might be funded in this category include wheelchairs or communication equipment.

* Category 3 – Learning and development

This category supports children to participate in learning and development opportunities, which may include a contribution to fees to attend community based activity groups.

I think my child needs additional supports. How do I apply?

The first thing you should do is contact your allocated ECIS professional (or Intake Worker if you are still waiting to be allocated to a State funded ECIS). They will guide you through the eligibility requirements and application process.

The application form requires information relating to:

* your child’s current needs
* how Flexible Support Packages could help you to meet these needs
* what other supports you have tried to access
* what you will do to ensure you can meet the needs of your child into the future.

What are the eligibility requirements?

There are five eligibility criteria that must be met.

1. You must have applied for and be receiving, or waiting for State Government funded ECIS.
2. The requested supports must be linked to your Family Services and Support Plan.
3. The supports can only be provided through ECIS FSP.
4. Supports must fit one of the approved categories.
5. Supports must be targeted and time-limited.

Is there a limit on how much we can request?

All children and their families will have individual and different levels of need that will inform their funding requirements. There is a funding limit of $5,500 per child per financial year.

Sometimes a family might need a higher level of support over a financial year. This may be related to a significant change in their circumstances or the need to purchase a highly specialised item. In these cases, families should talk to their ECIS professional about an exceptional circumstances application.

How are ECIS Flexible Support Packages allocated?

There will be a panel in your area that will assess your application. This panel will consider and approve applications that meet the eligibility and funding requirements.

This panel includes ECIS professionals and a regional representative from the Department of Education and Training.

How long will it take to find out if an application has been successful?

Regional Assessment Panels meet at least ten times per year.

You and your allocated ECIS professional (or Intake Worker) should expect to be notified of the outcome within a week of the panel meeting.

Sometimes families are asked to provide additional information to help the panel make a decision. In these circumstances, your ECIS professional will work with you to gather the required information and submit it to the FSP Coordinator.

What happens once we have been allocated a funding amount?

The FSP Coordinator from the agency closest to you will send a letter or email to you advising you of the outcome. They will then contact the person you nominated in the application form to arrange the purchase of the approved supports.

Funding cannot be provided for supports that have been purchased prior to notification of approval.

Where can I get more information?

The best place to start is with your ECIS professional. They will be able to provide you with further information.

You are also able to access the *ECIS FSP: Guidelines for families and ECIS professionals*.

The guidelines:

* outline the eligibility criteria and processes for applying for FSP
* provide information of the types of goods and services that may receive funding under FSP
* include a list of other support services and programs that may be able to assist your family.

The guidelines and the application form are available to download at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/needs/pages/flexiblesupportpackages.aspx>.