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|  | Early Years Services |
|  | Dr Avril V Brereton and Dr Kerry J Bull |

Your child’s early years are the foundation for future health, learning, development and wellbeing. They are critically important and influence your child for life.

Assistance for children with ASD

Victoria has a range of services available to assist you and your child from birth through to adulthood. Children are provided with high-quality early childhood education and care programs and a supported transition to the school system.

The Victorian Government supports the health, development, wellbeing and learning of your child by funding services such as the maternal and child health service, kindergarten programs, supported playgroups, parenting services, child care, occasional care, early childhood intervention services, flexible support packages, kindergarten inclusion support packages and the preschool field officer program.

Victoria is committed to ensuring that all families, including those with a child with ASD, have access to high quality services that are responsive to their needs.

Early Childhood Intervention Services

Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) support children with a disability or developmental delay from birth to school entry and their families.

Services are tailored to meet the individual needs of the child and focus on supporting the child in their natural environments and in their everyday experiences and activities.

The overall aim of these services is to provide parents and families with the knowledge, skills and support to meet the needs of their child and to optimise the child's development and ability to participate in family and community life. All services are provided using a family-centred approach, recognising the importance of working in partnership with the family.

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

ECIS Flexible Support Packages

ECIS Flexible Support Packages are specifically designed to provide short term individualised support to address a specific unmet need(s) unable to be fully met by ECIS. Families with children eligible for ECIS may apply for an ECIS Flexible Support Package.

ECIS Flexible Support Packages are provided using a family-centered approach, which recognises that families have the skills, strength and ability to identify their own needs and work towards bringing positive change into their lives.

ECIS Flexible Support Packages aim to help families access supports and services that promote optimal child development, support the needs of children with a disability or developmental delay and ease some of the additional pressures on parents.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/needs/Pages/flexiblesupportpackages.aspx>

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages

The objective of Kindergarten Inclusion Support Packages is to build the capacity of funded kindergartens to support the access and participation of children with a disability and high support needs and/or with complex medical needs.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/needs/Pages/kinderinclusion.aspx>

Preschool Field Officer Program

The Preschool Field Officer Program provides support to government funded kindergartens to enhance their capacity to provide for the access and participation of children with additional needs in inclusive kindergarten programs.

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

For more information about the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s Autism Friendly Learning website go to:

[www.education.vic.gov.au/autism](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/autism)