



Disability Services

Information Sheet

Child and Youth Service: Early Childhood Program

The Early Childhood Program in metropolitan Adelaide offers a range of support services to children from birth to school age who have significant developmental delays or conditions associated with intellectual disability.

We aim to support families/carers as they provide children with opportunities to realise their developmental potential.



Who is eligible?

Children with:

- ▶ a diagnosed condition which is associated with a substantial probability of intellectual disability later in life (eg Down syndrome)
- ▶ a significant global developmental delay (of the order of 25 per cent in the majority of areas of development).

Who we are

The Early Childhood Program is one of the services provided by Disability Services, which is a part of the Department for Families and Communities.

Workers from a range of professions work closely together in teams across metropolitan Adelaide. The teams include:

- ▶ **Speech Pathologist**—supports eating and drinking skills and communication (speech and language)
- ▶ **Physiotherapist**—supports motor skills eg balance, sitting, crawling, walking
- ▶ **Occupational Therapist**—supports play, self-help skills (dressing, toileting), hand skills
- ▶ **Social Worker/Early Childhood Worker**—provides information, support, counselling, and assistance with accessing services
- ▶ **Psychologist**—provides advice and strategies relating to children's behaviour and development.

Our philosophy

The Early Childhood Program is committed to a family-centred approach. It aims to provide a service that:

- ▶ focuses on the child within the context of the home and community

- ▶ acknowledges the importance of families/carers as the child's most valuable source of support
- ▶ is flexible to meet diverse family/carer needs, characteristics and values.

What we do

Services provided may include:

- ▶ Developmental assessment and strategies for promoting the child's learning and skill development in a range of areas including communication, play, gross and fine movements and independence skills
- ▶ Practical information and support related to the child's development
- ▶ Links to other services and agencies such as playgroups, childcare, kindergartens, etc
- ▶ Groups and information sessions on areas such as toilet training, communication, sleep and play
- ▶ Assistance and strategies for understanding and responding to behavioural issues
- ▶ Opportunities for families/carers to meet each other.

The Early Childhood Program will undertake visits in the home, or other places such as kindy or childcare, as negotiated with families/carers.

The emphasis of all programs is to help families/carers and others involved to carry out activities that will support the development of the child.

Country services

Disability Services country teams are smaller and located in all regional areas throughout South Australia. The teams include service coordinators from a range of backgrounds who are supported by the Child and Youth Service in the provision of developmental and behavioural services, and support for families/carers where there are high and complex needs. In addition, Senior Developmental Programmers provide specialist interventions and case management services for children up to 8 years of age with Autism Spectrum Disorders. A range of early childhood services is provided by regional community health services.

Referrals

Referrals can be made by families/carers, health professionals or other interested persons (such as teachers). Parental/Guardian permission is required for a referral. Referral packages can be obtained by contacting:

The Referral Officer, Disability Intake Team
Regency Park Centre
171 Days Rd
Regency Park SA 5010
Telephone: 1300 786 117

