

## Kindergarten Inclusion Support - Disability

### Fact Sheet for Families

#### WHAT IS THE KINDERGARTEN INCLUSION SUPPORT (KIS) PROGRAM?

The KIS Program contributes to the provision of a quality kindergarten program. The KIS Program enhances a kindergarten's capacity to provide a program that is responsive to the individual abilities, interests and needs of children with a disability or developmental delay with ongoing high support needs or children with complex medical needs in an inclusive kindergarten environment.

#### THE KINDERGARTEN INCLUSION SUPPORT PROGRAM:

- provides assistance to complement early childhood teacher knowledge and skills, while acknowledging their expertise in supporting children's learning and development
- supports early childhood teachers to build their capacity to develop and implement an inclusive program
- supports early childhood teachers to contribute to positive outcomes for children, as defined in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
- responds to the child's abilities and strengths, as well as their needs by supporting the kindergarten to enhance their learning and development
- promotes collaboration between the family and services recognising that early childhood teachers require varying levels of additional support\*

#### WHAT ARE THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS?

The application for KIS assistance must address the eligibility criteria. It is important to note that it is the kindergarten, not the parent, that applies for assistance.

The kindergarten applying for KIS support must be funded by the Victorian government to deliver a kindergarten program and the support requested is in addition to the existing resources available to the kindergarten and necessary to build the capacity of the service to support the inclusion of a child with a disability and ongoing high support needs or complex medical needs.

For information on the eligibility criteria please visit: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/news/Pages/kinderinclusion.aspx> and look for *Disability Packages - Guidelines and Information*.

#### I THINK MY CHILD NEEDS ADDITIONAL SUPPORT IN KINDERGARTEN. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If your child has a disability or is undergoing continuing assessment of a disability, you should first contact your kindergarten.

The early childhood teacher will then:

- meet with you to discuss and support your child's enrolment
- establish a Program Support Group, which includes the family, to assist the kindergarten to develop an Inclusion Support Plan.

If this planning process results in identifying that the kindergarten requires resources that are additional to their existing resources to support your child's inclusion in the program:

- the Program Support Group will assist the kindergarten to complete an application for KIS Program support
- the kindergarten will then submit the application.

If, however, this planning process results in the kindergarten identifying they have the capacity to include your child within their existing resources, an application for the KIS Program support will not be required.

#### HOW IS KIS SUPPORT ALLOCATED?

The level and type of support provided to the kindergarten will be informed by information provided in the KIS application and associated Inclusion Support Plan. A Regional Advisory Group will determine the eligibility of the application and level of resources to be provided to the kindergarten. The range of resources available through the KIS Program include specialist training to support kindergarten staff to develop the confidence, understanding and skills to include a child, specialist consultancy to support program planning, minor building modifications and addition staffing support.

The resources allocated will be used to support the kindergarten to respond to the needs of the all children in the group.

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#### HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO FIND OUT THE OUTCOME OF THE APPLICATION?

The kindergarten will be advised of the outcome within four weeks of an application being lodged, with adjustments for holiday periods.

#### WHAT HAPPENS ONCE THE KINDERGARTEN IS NOTIFIED OF THE OUTCOME?

The kindergarten, as the applicant for support, is responsible for advising the family of the outcome.

The kindergarten will work in partnership with you and the Program Support Group to monitor and review the Inclusion Support Plan to support your child's participation in the learning and development opportunities provided in the program.

#### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A KIS FUNDED ADDITIONAL ASSISTANT?

If a KIS funded additional assistant is allocated to the kindergarten as the result of a KIS application, they will work as a member of the team delivering a kindergarten program that is inclusive of all children in the group. This supports the early childhood teacher to build the capacity of the team to respond to the needs of all children in the program.

Responsibility for one-on-one support for any children in the program should be shared between all members in the kindergarten team. The KIS funded additional assistant should not work exclusively with the child identified in the KIS package application.

#### WHO DO I CONTACT IF I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE OUTCOME?

You can raise any concerns you have about the outcome with your kindergarten.

Most concerns are resolved at the first step.

Your kindergarten has the right to request an appeal of decision regarding eligibility or level of support approved. All appeals should be in writing from the kindergarten and must be accompanied by relevant new and additional information, signed by the early childhood teacher, parent/guardian/carer and, where applicable, the Early Years Management.

If your concerns remain unresolved after you have approached the relevant staff or if you are concerned about service policy, you can raise it further with the management of the service or the Board of Management, where applicable. It is recommended that you provide your concerns in writing to the Chief Executive Officer.

If you feel that your complaint has not been addressed satisfactorily by the service or program provider, you can contact your relevant Department of Education and Training regional office. If you are unsure about which region your service or program provider is in, please ask them directly.

The Early Childhood Quality, Participation and Access Manager will provide you with advice and assistance and, if required, direct your complaint to other Departmental staff to respond.

#### WHERE CAN I GO IF I NEED MORE INFORMATION?

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

You are also able to access the KIS Guidelines from the Department of Education and Training website: -

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/news/Pages/kinderinclusion.aspx>

The guidelines provide more detail regarding:

- the eligibility criteria
- process for applying for KIS Package Program support
- assessment processes
- Departmental contacts

Additional fact sheets have been developed to further support understanding of inclusive practice in the context of kindergarten service provision and the KIS Package Program and include more detail regarding:

- The role of the Program Support Group
- The role of a KIS funded Additional Assistant
- Team approach to inclusion

For a copy of these fact sheets, please speak with your kindergarten teacher.

\* In the context of this fact sheet, family may refer to biological, adoptive or step parents, siblings, grandparents or other extended family members, foster carers or other legal guardians of the child with a disability or developmental delay.