

# My child has Autism Spectrum Disorder

Information for Queensland families of young children



*A Parent Connect resource*

# Message from Autism Queensland



Autism Queensland is pleased to endorse this vital collaborative booklet for parents of young children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The booklet represents the combined knowledge and expertise in early development of the key Autism agencies in Queensland, both Government and non-Government.

This booklet is an essential resource for families of children aged birth to eight years who receive a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The booklet will guide and support families as they navigate their way through the important early years of their child's development.

**Penny Beeston**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Autism Queensland

# Message from the AEIOU Foundation



AEIOU Foundation is committed to supporting children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families. With many different services available, parents and carers often have to research how to access care, therapy and education for their children.

It's our hope that *My child has Autism Spectrum Disorder: Information for Queensland families of young children* proves to be a useful guide for parents and carers, connecting families to the services that will best meet their needs.

We commend the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services for creating this publication and for their continued investment into early intervention for children with Autism Spectrum

**Alan Smith**  
Chief Executive Officer  
AEIOU Foundation

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# 1. About Autism Spectrum Disorder

This booklet is intended to answer some questions that you as a parent may have if you are concerned your child has Autism Spectrum Disorder or, your child has recently been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Importantly it shows that there is help available for you, your child and your family.

Autism Spectrum Disorder covers disorders previously referred to as autism, pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified, childhood disintegrative disorder and Asperger's disorder. According to new diagnostic criteria released in 2013, these disorders are no longer regarded as distinct conditions but are collectively defined as 'autism spectrum disorder'. Autism Spectrum Disorder is caused by an abnormality of brain development, and is usually detected in early childhood and lasts throughout a person's life.

Autism Spectrum Disorder is characterised by impairments in communication, social interaction and restricted repetitive patterns of behaviour, interests and activities.

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder often experience hyper or hypo reactivity to sensory aspects of their environment including adverse responses to sounds, textures, smells, touching objects, lights and movement.

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a spectrum and this means there is can be a large range of symptoms and these will vary greatly depending on the severity of the autistic condition, the child's age and their developmental level.

As a parent, you should have the same aspirations for your child with Autism Spectrum Disorder as you would for your other children. Your child will benefit greatly from their family encouraging them to develop their strengths, skills and interests which will help them to learn, communicate and socialise with other people.

## How common is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

It is estimated that between 1 in 100 children has Autism Spectrum Disorder, making it more common than many other childhood conditions. There are gender differences in the occurrence of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Boys are four times more likely than girls to have Autism Spectrum Disorder and boys are nine times more likely than girls to have Asperger's Disorder.

The number of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder has increased significantly over the past 15 years. However, it is unknown if this is a result of an actual increase in the number of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (prevalence rate) or whether it is a result of improved practices in diagnosis and increased public awareness about Autism Spectrum Disorder.

## 2. Diagnosis

The early years are the most critical for your child's development. It is the time when the brain is still developing and is more responsive to therapies and interventions. Having your child assessed and diagnosed as having Autism Spectrum Disorder will enable access to necessary early intervention services which aim to improve your child's social and emotional abilities and provide information and support for you, as parents, about caring for your child.

The diagnosis of conditions on the Autism Spectrum Disorder spectrum is based on observations of social and communication difficulties, narrow interest areas and rigid and repetitive behaviours.

Autism Spectrum Disorder can be diagnosed in children as young as 18 months of age. If you notice delays in your child's development, or your child is developing unusual behaviours, you should discuss your concerns with a doctor (GP) or child health nurse. This may result in a referral to a medical specialist, such as a paediatrician, for further advice or a diagnosis.

### Who provides a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Queensland?

There is no medical test, such as a blood test or brain scan, for diagnosing Autism Spectrum Disorder. A diagnosis is based on information provided about a child's development, observing their behaviour, and the use of educational and psychological tests.

In Queensland, paediatricians assess and diagnose children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Input to diagnosis may be sought from speech language

pathologists, occupational therapists and psychologists.

A doctor (GP) or a Child Health Nurse, based at a community health centre, can provide a referral to a paediatrician.

Paediatricians can be seen privately or through the public health system.

There will usually be costs for private paediatricians; however waiting times for an appointment may be shorter.

The consultation will be at no cost if it is with a paediatrician in the public health system.

Child psychiatrists also diagnose Autism Spectrum Disorder however this is usually for older children. Families living in rural and remote areas can access a visiting Queensland Health paediatrician.

For information on how to access visiting paediatricians and other key services to obtain a diagnosis (particularly in rural and remote areas of the state), please see page 33 for contact details of Local Area Coordinators or Child Connect Officers.

### More Information

- Keep a diary or video situations where you notice your child behaves differently from other children, e.g. at playgroup, to discuss with your GP, child health nurse or paediatrician.

### After diagnosis

It is not unusual for parents to feel overwhelmed when they first learn about their child's diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Even if you have suspected for some time that your child may have Autism Spectrum Disorder, it is important to recognise that you are likely to need extra support.

You may get this support from your family and friends, but it is also good to talk to your GP and find out about local parent support groups.



When your child receives a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, a number of things will happen. Options for treatment will be explored and a treatment plan will be developed. You will receive information on the services and supports available in your local community.

### **Carers Queensland**

Carers Queensland provides carers with information, education, training, advocacy, counselling and other support services that may assist them in their caring role. The organisation also raises awareness about the valuable roles and contributions of carers.

### **Parent Connect**

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services' Parent Connect initiative supports parents of newborns and children newly diagnosed with disability. It is an early-response service providing information and linking families to family support networks and community services.

### **Child health services in the community**

Staffed by nurses and allied health professionals, free child health services are available at community clinics. Home visiting may also be provided. Child health checks are recommended at one, two, four, six and 12 months of age. Information is available on child health, parenting, child development, immunisation and nutrition. Families can be linked to local services and parent groups.

For further information refer to your baby's Red Book (personal health record).

### **Financial support**

If you live in a rural or remote area and need to travel to attend specialist medical appointments, you may be eligible for the Queensland Patient Transport Assistance Scheme. Ask your GP for further information.

If your child's support needs mean that you are unable to enter paid employment, you may be eligible for a Carer Payment. Centrelink can provide more information regarding your eligibility as well as information on supplementary payments such as Carer Allowance and Child Disability Assistance Payment.

#### **Find out more**

#### **Parent Connect**

4759 2037

[www.parentconnect.org.au](http://www.parentconnect.org.au)

# 3. Early intervention services

Early intervention services are important for all children with disability including children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Early intervention services can assist your child to develop skills in play, communication, social relationships and everyday tasks. They can also assist in increasing your child's independence and adaptability and improve their readiness to participate in child care, kindergarten and school.

Early intervention services provide a range of supports for families of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder from birth to school-entry age.

These services include:

- information and planning
- advice on the child's developmental needs
- multidisciplinary therapy to support the child's development and help reach developmental milestones
- referrals to other specialist services and mainstream services
- coordination of services for children with complex needs
- support with transitioning to a kindergarten program and school
- counselling and linking families with other families and support groups.

## How will my child benefit from early intervention?

Early intervention for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder is most effective and provides the best possible outcomes when provided to children in the early years. Early intervention services should be

tailored to the individual needs of your child and family.

It is important for you as a parent to have a good rapport with the specialists and feel able to ask lots of questions about your child's therapy and their progress.

Early intervention services provide you and your family with the knowledge, skills and supports you require to meet the needs of your child, to optimise your child's development and increase their ability to participate in family and community life. All services recognise the importance of working in partnership with families. Ideally services are provided in a flexible way that meets the needs of as many families as possible.

All early intervention services involve professionals working directly with your child as well as teaching you strategies to support your child to develop their potential. Professionals should spend time with you working on goals that can be incorporated into family routines and play activities.

## Where can I access early intervention services?

Both the Queensland Government and the Australian Government fund early intervention services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Queensland. This section details the main services available.

### Autism Spectrum Disorder Early Intervention Initiative

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder up to age six can access early intervention services through the Autism Spectrum Disorder Early Intervention Initiative funded by the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services. This service is provided through Autism Queensland and the AEIOU Foundation.

### Autism Queensland

Autism Queensland (AQ) provides a range of early intervention services to children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families, including transdisciplinary centre-based education and therapy programs, home and community-based programs and family support programs which provide links with other families. Services are based in Cairns, Mackay, Rockhampton, Gladstone and Brisbane (Sunnybank and Brighton), but are also available on an outreach basis throughout Queensland.

Early intervention services are provided in AQ centres, the child's home or other early childhood setting such as child care or kindergarten. Parent coaching and support are a significant component of AQ services.

### AEIOU Foundation

The AEIOU Foundation (AEIOU) is an approved child care provider, delivering an intensive multidisciplinary early intervention program for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Children can access this program part-time (2.5 days a week) or full-time (5 days a week). AEIOU centres are located at Gold Coast, Brisbane (Nathan, Camira, Bray Park), Sunshine Coast (Sippy Downs), Toowoomba, Hervey Bay, Bundaberg, Emerald and Townsville.

### Helping Children with Autism Package

Children who receive a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder before their sixth birthday are eligible for supports

and services through the Australian Government Helping Children with Autism Package. After diagnosis, you will need to contact an Autism Advisor who will provide information about eligibility, funding available for early intervention and other support services.

Families of children under seven years of age will also be eligible to access the Early Days workshops which are available as face-to-face and online workshops and are provided through the Helping Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder Package.

Early Days face-to-face workshops provide information about choosing therapies, interventions and available services as well as assisting families through the early days of diagnosis. Early Days online workshops help families by equipping them with the skills to promote their child's early development. They also provide information on various topics such as managing stress, supporting siblings and sleep.

As part of the Helping Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder Package, the Australian Government has made new Medicare items (which attract a Medicare rebate), such as occupational therapy, speech language pathology and psychology services, available for children aged up to 13 years for diagnosis and treatment planning.

### Medicare

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder may be eligible for services funded through Medicare. These include:

- developing a treatment and management plan by a specialist, consultant physician or GP for children under 13 years
- up to four sessions with health professionals such as audiologists, occupational therapists, psychologists, speech and language pathologists or physiotherapists to develop a child's plan



- twenty intervention sessions with health professionals as identified in a child's plan — available for children up to 15 years.

Speak to your GP or medical specialist for more information about these Medicare services.

### Early intervention services

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services provides early intervention services to children who have, or are at risk of, developmental delay. This includes children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

These services can support your child in their play and independence, as well as develop their communication skills, and gross and fine motor movements.

The department also provides information for families on a range of topics and will support you to connect with other services and supports such as playgroups, childcare and parent support groups.

Children are prioritised for services according to their level of need and availability of places.

The Department of Education, Training and Employment provides therapy and early intervention services to children from birth to pre Prep age with a suspected or diagnosed disability and significant educational needs. Children with autism spectrum disorder who have a developmental delay, intellectual or physical disability can access these services.

Programs and services may include playgroup session, outreach support in your home, centre-based sessions and support to transition into Prep. The program can also provide access to advisory visiting teachers, who have specialist knowledge and skills to support your child at school.

### Child development services

The Department of Health provides early intervention services to children with a moderate to severe developmental delay or disability aged up to nine years, including children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Priority is given to children not eligible to receive services from other Queensland Government agencies.

Services include providing advice on your child's developmental needs and therapy services that encourage your child's development. Parent education and information sessions are also provided.

### Local Area Coordinators

Local Area Coordinators link children with disability and their families in regional, rural and remote areas with supports and services relating to their individual needs and interests, including accessing visiting specialists.

### Other service providers

While there are early intervention services available for children with disabilities, some families may want to seek support from a range of providers.

Your GP, paediatrician or child health nurse should be able to refer you to a range of specialists including physiotherapists, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists and psychologists.

### Support for parents

Parents of children with disability may feel overwhelmed from time to time, especially during times of change (e.g. when your child starts early intervention services, child care, kindy or school).

Having a network of support, including formal supports (e.g. early intervention services) and informal supports (other parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, your family and friends), can be a big help.

## Other parents

Parents often find the best support they have comes from other parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Other parents understand the joys and challenges of raising a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder and can share advice and information about local services and supports.

## Raising Children Network

Raising children network is an Australian Government initiative that provides a web-based source of information about parenting and child development activities for all children, including children with disability.

## The Umbrella Network

The Umbrella Network is based in Rockhampton and is a network of support and information for families who have a child with disability, including Autism Spectrum Disorder.

## Triple P — Positive Parenting Program

Triple P — Positive Parenting Program can help families who have a child with support needs to creatively problem solve and develop flexible and supportive family routines and strategies to support their child's learning and development.

Stepping Stones Triple P has been specially tailored for parents of children with disability. It can help parents address their children's behaviour and emotional problems that may be more challenging at times (e.g. going to sleep, mealtimes, choosing what clothes to wear, dressing, toileting, going shopping and going to the doctors).

Stepping Stones Triple P can be accessed in different ways, including information seminars, individual sessions on specific issues, group sessions, online options, and tip sheets and workbooks for parents.

## Playgroups

Play is an integral part of all children's development, including children with

disability. Through play, a child learns, builds confidence and develops a range of skills in readiness for childcare, kindergarten and school.

Playgroups nurture children with play-based learning experiences during key times of growth and development in their early years.

Playgroups offer a wonderful opportunity for young children to come together and play in a safe, relaxed and welcoming environment.

Playgroups are low cost and inclusive and all children under school age are welcome.

Play groups also help families by providing social support for parents. It provides an environment where parents can discuss and share parenting experiences and get information on how to address parenting issues. There are a range of playgroups available, including community playgroups, supported playgroups, Play Connect and the playgroup Plus Program.

### Find out more

#### Autism Advisor Program

1800 428 847

[aap@autismqld.com.au](mailto:aap@autismqld.com.au)

#### Medicare

132 011

[www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au) **Early Intervention Services** 13 QGOV  
[www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)

#### Early childhood development programs and services

Contact your local education regional offices

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

#### Child Development Services

13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

[www.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.health.qld.gov.au)

#### Local Area Coordinators

13 QGOV

[www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)

**Raising Children Network:** the Australian parent website  
[www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

#### The Umbrella Network

[www.theumbrellanetwork.org](http://www.theumbrellanetwork.org)

### PlayConnect Playgroups

PlayConnect Playgroups are designed to help families with children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) to connect with other families.

Families that have a child aged from 0-6 years with ASD or ASD like symptoms are welcome to join a Play Connect Playgroup. Children do not need an ASD diagnosis to join. Siblings aged 0 to 6 years old are also welcome to attend.

### MyTime groups

MyTime groups provides local support for mums, dads, grandparents and anyone caring for a young child under school age with disability or a chronic medical condition.

MyTime gives parents the chance to socialise and share ideas with others who understand the rewards and intensity of the caring role. Parents can meet with people in similar circumstances to have fun, hear from others and find out about available community support. Research-based parenting information is also available at group meetings. Each group has a play helper who can lead children in activities such as singing, drawing, and playing with toys, blocks or sand so parents can spend time focusing on catching up with others.

### Baby Bridges

Baby Bridges is a playgroup program for children with disability from birth to five years. Parents and carers hear up-to-date information from carers and specialists while their child attends a playgroup taken by professional occupational, music or speech specialists.

### Find out more

Search for services or specialists in your local area through the websites of professional associations

#### **The Australian Physiotherapy Association**

[www.physiotherapy.asn.au](http://www.physiotherapy.asn.au)

#### **Speech Pathology Australia**

[www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

#### **Occupational Therapy Australia**

[www.otaus.com.au](http://www.otaus.com.au)

#### **Australian Psychological Society**

[www.psychology.org.au](http://www.psychology.org.au)

#### **Triple P — Positive Parenting Program**

3236 1212

[www.triplep-steppingstones.net](http://www.triplep-steppingstones.net)

[www.triplep-parenting.net](http://www.triplep-parenting.net)

#### **Playgroup Queensland**

1800 171 882

[www.playgroupqueensland.com.au](http://www.playgroupqueensland.com.au)

#### **MyTime groups**

1800 889 997

[www.mytime.net.au](http://www.mytime.net.au)

#### **Baby Bridges**

Contact the Horizon Foundation

3245 4266

[www.babybridges.com.au](http://www.babybridges.com.au)

#### **Autism Behavioural Intervention Queensland**

3216 0777

[www.abiq.org](http://www.abiq.org)

## 4. Early childhood education and care

### What are early childhood education and care services?

Early childhood education and care services include child care and kindergarten services. Children can attend approved child care services from birth and all children are eligible to attend a kindergarten program in the year before they begin school (Prep). The Queensland Government provides funding support to approved kindergarten programs delivered in long day care or kindergarten services.

It is generally accepted that children who participate in early childhood education are likely to have better academic performance, better behaviour, and stay in education for longer. This includes children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

### How will my child benefit from child care?

Child care provides all children with an early opportunity to relate to peers and other adults. It is no different for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. It can also be an opportunity for you to receive input from qualified early childhood professionals and try new approaches to supporting the development of your child.

As a parent, child care can also provide you with opportunities to return to work, study or to have time with other members of your family.

### What supports are available for my child to attend child care?

The Australian Government supports children with disability who attend child care through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program. This support may be available to:

- subsidise the cost of additional educators or carers
- provide access to specialist equipment to assist inclusion
- provide professional development and resources for educators.

### How will my child benefit from a kindergarten program?

All children benefit from participating in an approved quality early education program, including children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families. Participation in a kindergarten program can help your child develop skills in communication, social interaction and positive behaviours. It can also assist your child to follow routines, as well as provide exposure to early literacy and numeracy concepts.

#### Tips for parents

Consider enrolling your child in child care, even if only for a few hours a week. This may help to develop your child's play and social skills and their ability to adapt to new environments.

Participation in a kindergarten program will give your child a greater chance of successfully transitioning into Prep and then into mainstream school.

Kindergarten programs offer play-based learning in a fun and nurturing environment.

All children benefit from these early learning experiences and develop skills including:

- learning to interact with other children
- developing a desire to learn and different ways of learning
- understanding and managing their feelings
- learning about themselves
- developing their confidence and independence
- developing communication skills.

## How will my child be supported in a kindergarten program?

Teachers in kindergarten services and long day care services can access support to assist children with disability to participate in their programs.

Children with disability, including children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, can receive additional supports to participate in a kindergarten program. Kindergarten services can apply under the Disability Support Funding Program, Department of Education, Training and Employment, to receive additional funding to support your child's participation in their kindergarten program.

Additional support may include:

- equipment and play resources
- training and professional development for kindergarten teachers
- extra teacher aide time to support the child's inclusion in the program.

Kindergarten programs in long day care services may be eligible for the Australian Government's Inclusion and

Professional Support Program. This provides professional development and other assistance to child care services supporting children with additional needs.

Kindergarten teachers can modify the kindergarten program to support the inclusion of your child. The wider kindergarten community can also be provided with information about Autism Spectrum Disorder to encourage inclusion of your child and your family in the service.

### Tips for parents

Link your therapist or early intervention provider with your child's kindergarten teacher to help plan your child's program. They can also help identify the supports they will need to participate in their program.

Talk to the kindergarten teacher about your child's strengths and areas that may need development, as well as how your child prefers to learn new things.

## How do I plan my child's transition into a kindergarten program?

Starting in a kindergarten program involves significant transition for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families.

Successful transition planning requires a team approach with your family and the kindergarten teacher. Planning should commence six to 12 months before your child starts in the service.

Transition planning for your child to start their kindergarten program involves a range of activities including enrolment, working with the kindergarten teacher to plan a suitable program for your child, and help to identify the additional supports needed (e.g. training and educational and play equipment).



Other activities to include in your transition planning include visits to the kindergarten to become more familiar with the environment and routines, and gradually adjusting routines at home to be similar to those they will experience in the program.

## Support from Autism Queensland

Autism Queensland's outreach team can visit eligible kindergartens and early childhood centres to provide information, advice, support and individualised strategies to parents, teachers and other personnel.

### Tips for parents

Find out where the kindergarten programs are in your area. Talk to kindergarten teachers and other parents to find out how they support the inclusion of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in kindergarten programs.

### Find out more

#### **Early childhood education and care services**

**Early years centres** provide education, family support and health services for children 0–8 years.

[www.dete.qld.gov.au](http://www.dete.qld.gov.au)

or phone 13 QGOV

#### **Disability Support Funding Program, Early Childhood Education and Care Services and Kindergarten Services**

[www.dete.qld.gov.au](http://www.dete.qld.gov.au)

#### **Inclusion and Professional Support Program**

(Australian Government)

[www.mychild.gov.au](http://www.mychild.gov.au)

## 5. Starting school

Starting school is an important time for children and families. The transition to school may present challenges for your child, as well as for the rest of your family, and good planning is critical. It is important to start planning for the transition to school at least 12 months before your child is due to begin.

### Where can I enrol my child?

All children are able to enrol at their local state school.

It is best to talk to the principal of the school you are considering to check the type and level of support available for your child before completing enrolment forms. You may also be asked to attend an interview with a staff member as part of the process.

Choosing a school for your child is an important decision, so it may also be useful to talk to other parents who have children at the school you are considering.

### Is my child ready for Prep?

Prep is offered in all state schools as a full five-day-per-week program. To be eligible for Prep a child must turn five by 30 June in the year they start Prep. With the introduction of the Australian Curriculum, full-time attendance in Prep gives children, including children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, the foundation they need for successful learning in Year 1 and beyond.

If you are concerned that your child is not ready to start Prep at that time, you should discuss the specific needs of your child with the principal of the school you plan to enrol your child in. The principal will help you determine

the impact of delaying your child's entry into Prep.

Parents of compulsory school-age children have a legal obligation to ensure that their children are enrolled in school and attend every day of their educational program. Enrolment and full-time attendance at Prep fulfils this obligation.

### How can I prepare my child for school?

Starting school is a big step for all children and their families. Children develop at different rates and in different ways. It is important to tell your child you believe they are ready for school.

We recommend you contact your local school in the year before you enrol your child to discuss your child's individual needs. This will give the school time for planning to ensure your child has a successful and positive start to schooling. If you are concerned about your child's readiness for school discuss this with the school of your choice and your early intervention service provider.

If your child has been receiving services from an early childhood intervention service or a kindergarten program, staff from these services can provide information to the school about your child's strengths and needs, which will assist with the transition process.

There are a number of things you can do to help prepare your child for the transition to school. This should include visiting the new school several times before starting school, initially during quiet times of the day (possibly before or after school hours) and later at busier times so your child becomes familiar with the school environment.

### Tips for parents

Check to see if the school you are considering has an open day that you can attend with your child.

Introducing your child to the concept of visual schedules is a good idea before they start school. It also provides an opportunity to work with your child to develop new vocabulary they will need at school.

These children can be supported through the full array of student support services allocated to regions and schools.

### Tips for parents

Appropriate visual supports may be useful to prepare your child for school (e.g. photos of your child's new teacher, their new classroom, and the playground).

## How will my child be supported to learn at school?

The Australian Curriculum Foundation Year has been developed to give children in Prep the important foundational learning they will need for successful progression to Year 1.

The Australian Curriculum started in Queensland in the 2012 school year. It aims to provide a high-quality curriculum for all, while understanding the diverse and complex nature of students with disability. It is shaped by the proposition that each student can learn and the needs of every child are important.

The principal is responsible for ensuring that all students with disability are provided with appropriate adjustments to enable them to access the curriculum.

When required, students with disability can be supported through appropriate adjustment programs made by teachers and schools in relation to:

- what a student learns
- how the student learns and instructional processes
- how the student demonstrates what they have learned.

### Student support services

Some students with disability will require additional educational support so they are able to access and participate at school alongside their same-age peers.

### Equipment at school

Education Queensland has an equipment loans service for students with disability who attend state schools. Schools can borrow specialised equipment and assistive technology from a regionally managed loans service to trial with students with disability. This helps schools to identify and make decisions about appropriate resources to support students' educational programs. The equipment remains the property of the Department of Education, Training and Employment.

## The Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) - Online Resource Transition Package

The *Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) - Online Resource Transition Package* is a joint project between the Department of Education, Training and Employment (DETE), AEIOU Foundation and Autism Queensland (AQ). Consultation and collaboration has also occurred with the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

The online resource package has been developed to assist early intervention service providers (e.g. AQ and AEIOU), parents and teachers (Kindergarten and Prep) by providing information and resources to support children with Autism Spectrum Disorder transition into Queensland schools.

The resource aims to provide a broad understanding of the support available for children and young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

## Autism Queensland – support for school age children

### Independent autism specific schools

Autism Queensland has two accredited independent schools located in Brighton and Sunnybank, which offer tailored education and therapy programs to children with autism spectrum disorder from Prep up to Grade 12.

Students with autism spectrum disorder are supported in a group of up to six students according to their age, ability and needs. Attendance is part-time, for either one, two or three days a week, for up to two years. This program enables students to also attend school for the remainder of the week, ensuring that connections with peers are maintained.

Students are supported throughout their placement by a multi-disciplinary team including teachers, teacher aides, social workers, psychologists, speech language pathologists and occupational therapists.

The school program aims to develop students' social, communication, adaptive behaviour, daily living and play and recreation skills through a modified academic curriculum which is linked to the Australian Curriculum.

### Outreach services

Autism Queensland provides outreach services to students with autism spectrum disorder in schools throughout Queensland, including state, independent and Catholic sector schools. This service provides information and support to parents and education staff to support the child's educational and developmental outcomes.

To be able to be referred to these outreach services, your child will need to have an Individualised Plan in place at school. You can contact Autism Queensland or visit their website to obtain a School Advisory Visit Request Form.

### Find out more

#### **The Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) - Online Resource Transition Package**

[education.qld.gov.au](http://education.qld.gov.au)

#### **Local schools can provide:**

#### **Education for children with disability: a guide for parents**

#### **School Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disability**

#### **Support for children with disability at school**

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

#### **Delayed entry to Prep**

[www.dete.qld.gov.au](http://www.dete.qld.gov.au)

#### **Australian curriculum**

[www.australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au)

# 6. Aids, equipment and assistive technology

If your child's disability affects their functioning across a range of areas, you may need to access assistive technology, specialised equipment or other aids to assist them in their daily living, communicating, learning, therapy and play. Professionals involved in your child's health, education and therapy will be able to give you advice regarding the most appropriate aids, equipment and assistive technology to consider.

This section details some services that may assist you to access support in this area.

## Department of Health — Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme

The Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) provides access to subsidy funding for the provision of MASS endorsed aids and equipment to eligible Queensland residents, including children with disability.

The range of MASS aids and equipment is aimed at assisting people to live at home and include aids for mobility, communication, continence and daily living.

Aids and equipment are subsidy funded either on a permanent loan basis, private ownership or through the purchase of consumables.

## Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

Assistance can be provided to purchase aids, equipment and assistive technology for eligible children if the item is related to the disability and encourages independence and community participation. To access this assistance, a prescription from your child's therapist is required.

## The Community Aids Equipment and Assistive Technologies Initiative

The Community Aids Equipment and Assistive Technologies Initiative subsidises aids and equipment for eligible clients. Categories for aids and assistive technologies include community mobility, communication support, active participation and postural support.

## LifeTec

LifeTec Queensland provides information, consultation, and education on assistive technology which aims to help improve quality of life and increase independent living skills. LifeTec has offices in Brisbane and Townsville and has a mobile outreach team that offers services across the state.

## All Abilities Playgrounds

All Abilities Playgrounds are located across Queensland and are specifically designed to enable children with and without disability to enjoy fun and challenging play together, side-by-side. There are 17 playgrounds located across the state.

There is also an All Abilities ePlayground which offers free online fun and games for children of all abilities.

## Noah's Ark Toy Library

Noah's Ark Educational Resources and Toy Library has a wide range of toys and equipment, some of which are designed and adapted for children with disability.



To borrow from the Noah's Ark Educational Resources and ToyLibrary, you will need to be a member of Noah's Ark.

Membership is open to:

- families with a child with a diagnosed disability
- schools supporting a child or children with diagnosed disability
- community organisations supporting a child or children with diagnosed disability
- children's services supporting a child or children with diagnosed disability
- professionals (e.g. teachers, therapists) supporting a child or children with diagnosed disabilities.

#### Find out more

##### **Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme**

[www.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.health.qld.gov.au)

##### **Disability Services**

13 QGOV

[www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)

##### **Common Aids Equipment and Assistive Technologies Initiative**

[www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au)

##### **Education Queensland**

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

##### **Lifetec**

[www.lifetec.org.au](http://www.lifetec.org.au)

##### **All abilities playgrounds**

[www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)

##### **Noah's Ark Toy Library**

3391 2166

For further information contact the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services:

Telephone: 13 QGOV (13 74 68)

Telephone Typewriter (TTY): 133 677

Email: [disabilityinfo@disability.qld.gov.au](mailto:disabilityinfo@disability.qld.gov.au)

Web: [www.qld.gov.au/disability](http://www.qld.gov.au/disability)

If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service:

- TTY users phone 133 677
- Speak and Listen users phone 1800 555 727 then ask for 13 QGOV (13 74 68)
- Internet relay users connect to the NRS ([www.relayservice.com.au](http://www.relayservice.com.au)) and then ask for 13 QGOV (13 74 68)

Other languages and formats:

If you need the assistance of an interpreter, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service, TIS National, on 13 14 50 and ask to be connected to the Disability Information Service.

This document is available in alternative formats (including large print) on request. If you would like a copy in another format, please contact Disability Information Service on 13 QGOV (13 74 68) or email [disabilityinfo@disability.qld.gov.au](mailto:disabilityinfo@disability.qld.gov.au)

\* Calls from mobile phones are charged at applicable rates.

Queenslanders now have access to disability related information at one easy online location. Visit [www.qld.gov.au/disability](http://www.qld.gov.au/disability) to find out about government supports and services for people with disability, their families and carers. The new site includes links to information about support groups and counselling, education and where access help.

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