

“We only had one hiccup during the year, when my son’s care needs changed and it was my wish to introduce the use of a suction machine to his daytime care needs. I am pleased to say that we worked through this issue, but only because the lines of communication between the staff and myself were kept open.”



Children with complex care needs

Thoughtful planning and good training will be needed to make sure staff have the skills and confidence to look after your child’s personal care needs.

Conditions that need complex care can include epilepsy, percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) feeding, tracheotomies, anaphylaxis, behaviours of concern or other conditions where staff need specific skills and training beyond general first aid.

Some kindergarten services will take the attendance of a child with complex care needs in their stride, while for others it may be a new experience.

Planning

All of your child’s care needs should be discussed with the Program Support Group (PSG), and included in the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Plan for your child.

Planning should identify staff skills and training needs, responsibility for tasks, the storage of medication and care supplies, and anything else needed to ensure the service meets your child’s complex care needs.

The Program Support Group should plan for specific facilities if required, such as an area where your child can have privacy for personal care.

Your child’s medical and personal care needs are confidential, and your child is entitled to be treated with respect and dignity.

Kindergarten services must record details of any medical conditions and attach a copy of management procedures for the condition in your child’s enrolment record.

Management procedures are often developed together with your child’s doctor. Families are responsible for providing all personal care supplies.

Training for staff

All staff should be trained to provide care for your child. This ensures that your child’s attendance at kindergarten doesn’t depend on the availability of just one staff member.

If your child has complex care needs, they may also be eligible for a Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services package which may cover the cost of staff training.

The Program Support Group should also review the kindergarten’s emergency response plan in light of the care needs of your child. The reviewed emergency response plan should be part of the training plan for all kindergarten staff.

Medication

There should be clear processes in place for the use and storage of medication. Changes to medication must be formally written up, signed and dated.

Check with the service as to how they record this information. Many kindergarten services have a form to complete which is then included in your child’s kindergarten record.

For more information

Office for Children and Early Childhood Development
www.office-for-children.vic.gov.au

Children’s Services Guide
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
www.education.vic.gov.au

Association for Children with a Disability
Phone 9818 2000 or
1800 654 013 (rural callers)
www.acd.org.au

Regular communication

Follow up with the kindergarten teacher and staff regularly to see how they are managing, and if they have any questions about the care they are providing for your child.

In addition to talking to kindergarten staff, using a communication book is a good way to keep staff up-to-date with any changes to your child’s care needs.

Your child’s care needs should also be reviewed in regular Program Support Group meetings.

With good planning and staff training, you should feel reassured that your child will be in good hands.