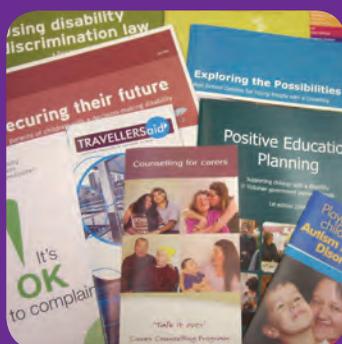


Through the Maze

An overview of services and support
for parents of children with a disability
in Victoria

8th Edition 2014–2015





Association for Children with a Disability

Association for Children with a Disability (ACD)

We provide information, support and advocacy to families who have a child or young adult with any type of disability or developmental delay across Victoria.

ACD is run by parents and siblings so we know what it means to have a child or sibling with a disability. We understand issues from a family perspective.

Our services include free telephone information and advocacy support for families.

Our member magazine, NoticeBoard, includes family stories that are a great source of strength and inspiration for other families and professionals who work with families.

Association for Children with a Disability
Suite 2, 98 Morang Road
Hawthorn VIC 3122

Phone 03 9818 2000
or 1800 654 013 (rural callers)
Fax 03 9818 2300
Email mail@acd.org.au
Web www.acd.org.au

Language interpreters

If you need a language interpreter to access our service, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50. Tell the operator your preferred language and that you want to speak to the Association for Children with a Disability on 03 9818 2000. This is a free service.

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 **Association for
Children with a Disability**

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Contents

Introduction	1	Housing & accommodation	32
Your local area & region	2	Information & advocacy	33
Where to start	4	Legal services	35
10 Key contacts	6	Local government	37
NDIS	7	Making a complaint	38
Early childhood services	9	Parent advocacy	40
Disability services	11	Recreation	41
Young adults	12	Respite care	42
Accessibility	14	Self-directed planning & support	43
Aids & equipment	15	Siblings	44
Autism spectrum disorders (ASD)	17	Therapy	45
Behaviour	18	Transport	46
Child care	20	Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (DEECD)	48
Communication & speech	21	Department of Human Services (DHS)	50
Counselling & support	22	Migrant Resource Centres	51
Disability-specific groups	24	Regional Parent Support Co-ordinators	52
Education	26	Index	53
Financial assistance	29	Parent feedback	55
Health & medical	31		

Your feedback

We welcome your feedback on this resource and any other aspect of our service. Send to:
Association for Children with a Disability, Suite 2, 98 Morang Road, Hawthorn VIC 3122
Phone: **9818 2000** or **1800 654 013 (rural callers)** Fax: 03 9818 2300
Email: mail@acd.org.au Web: www.acd.org.au

ACD is active in advocating to all levels of government and the broader community for improvements to services that support children with a disability and their families.

In carrying out this advocacy work, we welcome your thoughts and suggestions about how these services could be improved.

We hope this resource will help you 'through the maze' of existing services to find support and assistance of value to you and your family.

Introduction

This resource has been written as a guide through the maze of services that support children with a disability and their families in Victoria.

The 8th edition of Through the Maze gives an overview of services and support for children with a disability aged 0 to 18 years and their families living in Victoria.

This resource is designed as a basic introductory guide to help you identify services and support for your child and family.

The range of information included in this booklet may assist your family whether your child is waiting for, or has received, a formal diagnosis of disability or developmental delay.

Children and families

While families of children with a disability face additional challenges, there are many aspects of daily life that are the same for all families.

When trying to find the right balance of support from services, try not to lose sight of the things you enjoy doing together as a family. Sometimes the most important things have little or nothing to do with services.

Finding your way through the maze

It can sometimes take a lot of time and energy to find your way 'through the maze' of services to the support you need.

You may have to use all your research and communication skills to piece together the information most relevant to you and your family.

The best results are often achieved by seeking information from a range of sources rather than relying on just one professional or service. It takes time to explore all the options but the effort is usually worth it in the long run.

Regional Quick Guides

Through the Maze is complemented by a series of Regional Quick Guides available on our website www.acd.org.au

Your support network

In addition to professionals and services, think about other types of support that might assist you and your family. Three ingredients of a strong support network are:

- information
- support from other parents
- connecting with groups that advocate for improvements to the service system

There are many disability-specific groups and local, regional, statewide and national information and advocacy groups. Explore what these groups have to offer and how they might become part of your personal and family support network.

For more information

While every effort has been made to make sure the information included in Through the Maze is correct and up to date, services and contact details are always changing. If you come across details that have changed, please let us know.

For more information about any of the services and support in this booklet, contact our Parent Support Workers on **9818 2000** or **1800 654 013 (rural callers)** or visit our website www.acd.org.au

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development regions



Source: DEECD

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) Regions

DEECD North Eastern Metropolitan Region

Boroondara, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse, Yarra Ranges

DEECD North Eastern Non-Metropolitan Region

Alpine, Benalla, Indigo, Mansfield, Mitchell, Moira, Murrindindi, Greater Shepparton, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta, Wodonga

DEECD North Western Metropolitan Region

Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Yarra

DEECD North Western Non-Metropolitan Region

Greater Bendigo, Buloke, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Gannawarra, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mildura, Mount Alexander, Swan Hill

DEECD South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Bayside, Cardinia, Casey, Greater Dandenong, Frankston, Glen Eira, Kingston, Mornington Peninsula, Port Phillip, Stonnington

DEECD South Eastern

Non-metropolitan Region

Alpine Resort, Bass Coast, Bass Strait Islands, Baw Baw, French Island, East Gippsland, South Gippsland, Latrobe, Mount Baw Baw, Wellington

DEECD South Western Metropolitan Region

Brimbank, Hobson's Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Melton, Moonee Valley, Wyndham

DEECD South Western

Non-metropolitan Region

Ararat, Ballarat, Colac-Otway, Corangamite, Greater Geelong, Glenelg, Golden Plains, Hepburn, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Lady Julia Percy Island, Moorabool, Moyne, Queenscliffe, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, Southern Grampians, Surf Coast, Warrnambool, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack

Where to start

There are some key places to start when working your way through the maze of services and support available to you and your family.

The starting point for accessing information and support will depend on where you live, your child's age and whether your child has received a diagnosis. Each family has different needs and priorities for the best way services can assist them. You are entitled to expect that the range of services available will be flexible enough to be adapted to different family circumstances.

Universal & community services

Services that are available to all families are known as 'universal' or 'community' services. Families of children with a disability can access these services in the same way as other families. Examples include child care and recreation activities.

Specialist services

Services that are specifically designed for children with a disability are often referred to as 'specialist' disability services. Examples include respite care and therapy services.

Many families use a combination of community and specialist services.

Government services

Responsibility for the funding and administration of services for children with a disability and their families is shared between the Victorian Government (state) and the Australian Government (federal). Some services receive a combination of state and federal funding.

Local governments also provide a range of services and support for children with a disability and their families, and there are many community service organisations that provide services with government funding.

Referral to a service

While it's not always easy to ask for help, remember that services exist to assist children with a disability and their families. Making that first phone call can be difficult but it's better to make it as soon as possible rather than putting it off or waiting until you are in a crisis situation. You can self refer to a service or someone else can do this with your permission.

Eligibility

Most services and programs have defined eligibility criteria and you can ask for a copy of these in writing. Sometimes these are clear and easy to understand, while other times it may not be clear whether your child or family is eligible. If you're not sure, ask the service provider for clarification.

Community services organisations that are Registered Disability Service Providers may determine eligibility for their service based on whether your child has a disability according to the Disability Act 2006. To find out if the service is registered, you can view the list of Registered Disability Service Providers on the Department of Human Services (DHS) website www.dhs.vic.gov.au

If it is unclear whether your child meets the eligibility criteria for disability support under the Disability Act 2006, you can seek clarification from DHS or seek a review from the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). **See page 36.**

Accessing services

If there is high demand for a service, you may not be able to access it straight away. Services usually determine 'priority of access' on an ongoing basis. It's important to make sure that your family's needs are represented as clearly as possible. Services can only accurately assess your situation if you give them all the relevant information about your family.

Be honest and clear about your situation and contact the service again if your circumstances change. Putting your name down for a service is worthwhile because it means you are better placed to access the service in the future.

Working together

It is reasonable to expect that professionals and service providers will work together with you to identify and deliver the support that is most important to you and your family.

Positive partnerships are based on mutual respect and good communication. Trust your instincts and be prepared to ask questions and seek further explanations if there is something you disagree with or don't understand. Sometimes you have to be creative and put together a package of different services to achieve the right support for your family.

Planning and communication

An important part of the way services and support are delivered involves planning. Good planning is almost always based on good communication. This can include informal conversations and meetings as well as formal processes and written documents.

Under the Disability Act 2006, anyone can ask for assistance with planning but people with an intellectual disability must be offered assistance on request.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that planning is an ongoing process that allows you to explore your child's and family's needs, goals, aspirations and the support available to achieve these.

Transition planning

As your child gets older, you may need to use different combinations of services and support at different times.

Key times in your child's life are often referred to as times of 'transition', such as the transition from early intervention to kindergarten, from kindergarten to primary school, from primary school to secondary school, and from secondary school to adult life.

It's a good idea to plan for these transitions as early as possible so that you can explore all your options. Transition planning can involve collecting documents and reports, getting assessments, filling out forms and visiting schools and services.

Key contacts

When thinking about accessing services and support, remember that the full range of universal and community services is available to all families.

Some key contacts for accessing services and support are listed on the following page. If you don't have access to the Internet, you can ring and ask the service to send you some written information.

If you are a new parent, a range of parenting information is available on the Raising Children Network website.

Web **www.raisingchildren.net.au**

If English is not your preferred language, a service should assist you with either an interpreter or written information in your preferred language.

For more information

For more information about any of the services and support in this booklet, contact our Parent Support Workers on **9818 2000** or **1800 654 013 (rural callers)** or visit our website **www.acd.org.au**

10 Key contacts

1. Local council/shires

Contact your local council or shire to discuss your needs with the Home and Community Care (HACC) team. Also explore your local council directory for other local services. **See page 37.**

2. Centrelink

Contact Centrelink to find out if you are eligible for Carer Allowance (Child) or Carer Adjustment Payment. Phone **132 717**. **See page 29.**

3. Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) Central Intake 0 to 6

Contact ECIS for support for children with a disability or developmental delay aged 0 to 6. **See page 10.**

4. Disability Intake and Response Service, Department of Human Services

Contact your regional Disability Intake and Response Service for information about community supports and services for people with a disability, their families and carers in your local area. Phone **1800 783 783**. **See page 11.**

5. Disability-specific groups

Contact a disability-specific group for information and support. **See page 24.** These include:

Amaze (formerly Autism Victoria), phone **1300 308 699**, web **www.amaze.org.au**

Cerebral Palsy Support Network, phone **1300 277 600**, web **www.cpsn.org.au**

Down Syndrome Victoria, phone **1300 658 873**, web **www.downsyndromevictoria.org.au**

Genetic Support Network Victoria, phone **8341 6315**, web **www.gsnv.org.au**

6. Regional Parent Support Co-ordinator

Contact the Regional Parent Support Co-ordinator in your region for information about local services and groups, newsletters, workshops and events. **See page 52.**

7. MyTime Groups

Contact your local MyTime group for support and parenting information for anyone caring for a child with a disability or chronic medical condition. Phone **1800 889 997**

Web **www.mytime.net.au**

8. Community Health Centres

Contact your Community Health Centre for information about services such as physiotherapy and speech pathology. Web **www.health.vic.gov.au/pch/commhealth/directory.htm**

9. Neighbourhood Houses

Contact your local Neighbourhood House to find out about social, educational and recreational activities. Phone **9654 1104**, web **www.anhlc.asn.au**

10. Raising Children Network website

Visit the Raising Children Network website for parenting information.

Web **www.raisingchildren.net.au**

NDIS

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a new way of providing support for people with permanent and significant disability, their families and carers.

The NDIS aims to ensure that people with a disability are given every opportunity to make their own decisions and exercise choice and control. Through the NDIS families and carers can access information, referral and link with supports in the community.

The NDIS is being trialled in the Barwon region and includes people who live in the local government areas of:

- City of Greater Geelong
- Colac-Otway Shire
- Borough of Queenscliffe
- Surf Coast Shire

By July 2016, all Barwon area residents with significant and permanent disability will be able to access the scheme.

By July 2019, all eligible residents in Victoria will be covered. Check the NDIS website for updates on when the NDIS will be rolled out in your area.

You can use the My Access Checker tool on the NDIS website to see if you can get assistance from the NDIS.

Participant Plans

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) will work with you and the person you care for in planning, decision making and support co-ordination.

Each participant in the NDIS will have an individualised plan that is tailored to their goals, personal circumstances and disability support needs.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Phone **1800 800 110**

TTY: phone **1800 555 677**

then ask for **1800 800 110**

Speak and Listen: phone **1800 555 727**

then ask for **1800 800 110**

Internet relay: visit the National Relay Service website **relayservice.gov.au**

and ask for **1800 800 110**

Web **www.ndis.gov.au**

The types of supports that the NDIS may include:

- personal care to support an individual in their home or the community
- supports to assist people with disability to enjoy social and community interaction without relying solely on you
- supports that maintain a carer's health and wellbeing. This support may include participation in a support group or a special interest network. In deciding whether to fund or provide a support, the NDIA will take account of what it is reasonable to expect families, carers, informal networks and the community to provide.
- assistance with tasks of daily living including to help improve a person's ability to do things
- supported employment services and help for people to move to work programs that prepare people with disability in work, and
- training related to the caring role that may enhance your ability to provide care.

Reasonable and necessary supports

The NDIS funds 'reasonable and necessary supports' that help people with a disability to reach their goals, objectives and aspirations, and to undertake activities that enable their social and economic participation.

This support includes both informal supports such as informal arrangements with family, friends and community as well as formal supports such as health and education.

Decisions about what constitutes 'reasonable and necessary supports' are made by NDIA staff based on the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (NDIS Act) and the rules made under the NDIS Act. The operational guidelines also provide practical guidance for decision makers.

In order to be considered reasonable and necessary, a support must:

- be related to the participant's disability
- not include day-to-day living costs that are not related to a participant's disability support needs
- represent value for money
- be likely to be effective and beneficial to the participant, and
- take into account informal supports given to participants by families, carers, networks, and the community.

Types of supports that are funded

The types of supports that the NDIS may fund for participants include:

- daily personal activities
- transport to enable participation in community, social, economic and daily life activities
- workplace help to allow a participant to successfully get or keep employment in the open or supported labour market

- therapeutic supports including behaviour support
- help with household tasks to allow the participant to maintain their home environment
- help to a participant by skilled personnel in aids or equipment assessment, set up and training
- home modification design and construction
- mobility equipment, and
- vehicle modifications.

Supports not funded by the NDIS

Under the NDIS, a support will not be funded if it:

- is not related to the participant's disability
- duplicates other supports already funded by a different mechanism through the NDIS
- relates to day-to-day living costs that are not related to a participant's support needs, or
- is likely to cause harm to the participant or pose a risk to others.

Choice and control over funded supports

You have choice and the control over how you use funded supports in your plan and which service providers you use.

Reviewing your plan

You can ask the NDIA to review your plan. Usually, a review happens when your circumstances have changed or at your next scheduled plan review. The NDIA will look at all of the funded supports in the plan, not just one of them. You can also ask for an internal review of the decision to approve your statement of participant supports in your plan. This request needs to be made within three months after you are notified of this decision.

More information

Self-directed planning & support, 43

Early childhood services

Early childhood services support the health, well-being and development of children.

All families with children access early childhood services in their local community and usually combine a range of services to monitor their child's health, development and early childhood education. These can include Maternal and Child Health Services, playgroups, child care, kindergarten and early childhood intervention services, many of which are funded by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD). **See page 48.**

Diagnosis and assessment

The process of identifying a child's disability or developmental delay can vary greatly. Some conditions are evident at birth or soon after, while others can occur as the result of an accident or illness. While it can be common to get a diagnosis in the early years, diagnosis can occur at any age.

If you are concerned about your child, you can ask your doctor for a referral to a paediatrician (a doctor who specialises in caring for infants, children and adolescents). The paediatrician may then do a formal assessment of your child that can involve a series of visits and tests. Information and reports from these assessments can help to identify what services and support will benefit your child now, and in the future. These reports may also be useful when applying for some services.

The time surrounding a diagnosis can be very emotional and difficult for parents and families. You may want to ask for extra support from family, friends or a counsellor. **See page 22.**

Support for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) is available through the Helping Children with Autism package. **See page 17.**

Welcome to Early Childhood Services

A Parent's Guide to Early Childhood Services in Victoria

Provides information about early childhood development and services, including assistance for children with additional needs.

Web www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/support/pages/welcome.aspx

Maternal and Child Health Services

Provide information about child health and development and links to a range of services and support including playgroups and parent groups.

Maternal and Child Health Line

24-hour telephone support.
Phone **132 229**

Early Parenting Centres

Provide information, education, counselling and practical support in the early parenting years. The Maternal and Child Health Service or your doctor can refer you to an Early Parenting Centre or you can contact the centre yourself.

Mercy Health O'Connell Family Centre

Phone **8416 7600**
Web www.mercyhealth.com.au

Queen Elizabeth Centre

Phone **9549 2777**
Web www.qec.org.au

Tweddle Child and Family Health Service

Phone **9689 1577**
Web www.tweddle.org.au

Better Start for Children with Disability

Provides up to \$12,000 of early intervention funding for children diagnosed with cerebral palsy, deafblindness, Down syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, hearing impairment, sight impairment, Prader-Willi syndrome, Williams syndrome, Angelman syndrome, Kabuki syndrome, Smith-Magenis syndrome, CHARGE syndrome, Cornelia de Lange syndrome, Cri du Chat syndrome or microcephaly.
Phone: **Better Start Helpline 1800 242 636**
Web: **betterstart.net.au**

Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS)

Supports children with a disability or developmental delay from birth to school entry and their families. ECIS services are funded through DEECD and delivered by a range of providers including Specialist Children's Services and early childhood intervention agencies. Additional supports are available to families of children diagnosed with Pervasive Developmental Delay Not Otherwise Specified (PDDNOS) or with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). **See page 17.**

ECIS Flexible Support Packages

Assist children with complex support needs including, autism and social, behavioural, emotional and physical needs that cannot otherwise be provided through ECIS. It is a short-term response that can assist in achieving the agreed goals outlined in the Family Service and Support Plan. Packages can fund supports such as respite, access to transport, therapy, equipment, participation in playgroups or childcare, and support for siblings.

ECIS Central Intake

Provides information about specialist services including, assessment, educational and therapy services, planning and service co-ordination, parent support, flexible support packages and additional resources for kindergarten. **See page 48.**

Find an early childhood service or school website

Web **www.education.vic.gov.au/findaservice**

Kindergarten Inclusion Tip Sheets

Provide information about including children with a disability in kindergarten. Copies are available from the ACD office or **www.acd.org.au**



Making a Start: Building support for your child and family booklet

Free booklet for families that provides information about early intervention support.
Phone Carers Victoria on **1800 242 636**
Web **www.eciavic.org.au/documents/item/573**

Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA) (VC)

Phone **9819 5266**
Web **www.eciavic.org.au**

Early Learning Association Australia

Phone **9489 3500** or **1300 730 119 (rural callers)**
Web **www.elaa.org.au**

Playgroup Victoria

Phone **1800 171 882**
Web **www.playgroup.org.au**

PlayConnect playgroups

Offer play-based learning opportunities for children with ASD or ASD-like symptoms and social support networks for families and carers, as part of the Australian Government's Helping Children with Autism package. **See page 17.**
Phone **1800 171 882**
Web **www.playconnect.com.au**

MyTime groups

Provide local support and parenting information for anyone caring for a child with a disability or chronic medical condition.
Phone **1800 889 997**
Web **www.mytime.net.au**

More information

Child care, 20
Self-directed planning & support, 43

Disability services

Disability services can be provided by government, community services organisations and other agencies.

Depending on your child's age, development and your family's needs, you may access a number of different disability services. By connecting with one of these services you can begin to identify the range of other supports available to you and your family. Many disability service providers publish directories of services covering respite care and recreation.

Registered Disability Service Providers

Community service organisations funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide disability services must be approved as a Registered Disability Service Provider and comply with the Disability Act 2006. A list of Registered Disability Service Providers is available on the DHS website www.dhs.vic.gov.au

Disability Services, Department of Human Services

Disability Services of the Department of Human Services (DHS) provides a range of specialist services including, assessment, information and referral, service planning, case management and behaviour support.

Access to these services is via your regional Disability Intake and Response Service. When you contact Disability Intake and Response, an Intake and Response Worker will assess the eligibility of your child and family for services.

The Disability Act 2006 defines disability as an impairment that may be sensory, physical, neurological or an acquired brain injury, which results in substantially reduced capacity in at least one of the areas of self-care, self management, mobility or communication. This can include a range of disabilities including autism spectrum disorders.

Disability Intake and Response Service

Your regional Disability Intake and Response Service provides information about community supports and services for people with a disability, their families and carers.

Phone **1800 783 783**

Web www.dhs.vic.gov.au

Case Management

Your regional Disability Intake and Response Service or a community service organisation may assign a Case Manager to work with you to identify services and support to meet the needs of your child and family. A Case Manager can work with you to implement a support plan and assist by providing information, referral to services, arranging visits, dispute resolution and service co-ordination. One outcome of this planning may be access to a Flexible Support Package or Individual Support Package. **See page 43.**

Transport Accident Commission (TAC) Case Management

Some case management may be available through TAC for children whose disability is the result of a road accident.

Phone **1300 654 329** or

1800 332 556 (rural callers)

Web www.tac.vic.gov.au

More information

Self-directed planning & support, 43
Disability Act 2006, 35
Disability Services Commissioner, 38

Young adults

The transition from school to adult life can include further study, employment, volunteer work, training or a combination of these.

There is a range of community and specialist supports available to help young people with a disability find work, undertake further study or to participate in community activities once they finish school. Planning for the transition from school to adult life should focus on your child's goals and aspirations and be guided by people who have knowledge of your child's abilities and needs.

Programs and supports to help students with a disability find future pathways while still at school include the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL), Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Special School Programs, Vocational Education and Training in Schools (VETiS), Pre-apprenticeship programs, School Based Apprenticeships and Traineeships, and Workplace learning.

Centrelink can assist people with a disability with referral to employment services and advice on disability related payments. Tertiary education institutions in Victoria have a Disability Liaison Officer or equivalent who can assist students with a disability to choose and complete a course of study.

Managed Individualised Pathways (MIPs)

Managed Individual Pathways (MIPs) co-ordinators and careers teachers can support students to explore a range of post-school options while they are still at school. This may include developing a post-school plan to help students identify the things they are good at, interested in, enjoy doing and the supports that might be needed to achieve life goals. Ask your child's school for more information. Web www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/pages/mips.aspx

Exploring the Possibilities booklet

Provides a guide to transition planning from school to post-school options. Web www.dhs.vic.gov.au

Futures for Young Adults (FFYA) Program

The Futures for Young Adults (FFYA) Program is funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and provides information and support to young people with a disability leaving school who need additional transition support. Eligible young people can receive assistance from a transition planner to set goals and develop a Transition Plan. A Safety Net provision allows young people to get advice from a transition planner at any time within a three-year eligibility period until they turn 21.

Transition to Employment initiative

Assists young people with a disability leaving school who want to get a job but who are not yet ready to move into employment or receive assistance through a Commonwealth employment program. Phone your regional **Disability Intake and Response Service** on **1800 783 783** Web www.dhs.vic.gov.au

National Disability Co-ordination Program

Assists people with a disability to access post-school education, training and employment. Web www.ndcovictoria.net.au

Inner Melbourne VET Cluster (IMVC)

Career and transition information and support services for young people with a disability. Web www.imvc.com.au

Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre

Phone **1300 364 133** Web www.vtac.edu.au

My future website

Web www.myfuture.edu.au

Youth Central website

Web www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au

Proof of Age Card

Phone **1300 182 457**

Web www.vcgfr.vic.gov.au

Sexuality and relationships

Family Planning Victoria, Disability Support

Phone **9257 0131**

Web www.fpv.org.au/health-care/disability-support/

Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS)

Phone **9267 3755** (co-ordinator)

9267 3733 (individual advocate)

1300 727 176 (for rural callers)

TTY via the National Relay Service **133 677**

SMS **0412 814 851**

Web www.ydas.org.au

The Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALID)

Phone **9416 4003**

or **1800 655 570** (rural callers)

Web www.valid.org.au

Turning 16 and Centrelink

When your child turns 16, the disability service system changes. For some things your child will be considered an adult. It's a good idea to start planning for this transition when your child turns 15. Around the time of your child's 15th birthday, make an appointment with Centrelink to discuss options to manage any payment changes that will occur once your child turns 16.

When your child turns 16, you will no longer receive Carer Allowance (Child) and Centrelink will invite you to be assessed for Carer Allowance (Adult) which has its own eligibility criteria. The eligibility criteria for Carer Payment also changes when your child turns 16. The application process can be quite involved so allow plenty of time.

You may need to provide copies of birth certificates, Medicare card, school reports, medical reports, bank statements, income statements, tax file numbers and set up a bank account in your child's name. Keep a copy of all completed forms and supporting documents. Make another appointment with Centrelink to lodge the completed forms before your child's 16th birthday, as payments cannot be backdated.

Your child may be eligible for:

Disability Support Pension

Assists people who are unable to work for two years because of illness, injury or disability, or if they are permanently blind.

Pensioner Education Supplement

Assists with the costs of full or part-time study.

Education Entry Payment

Assists with the costs of returning to study.

Mobility Allowance

Assists people with disabilities looking for work, paid employment, voluntary work, vocational training and independent living or life skills training who cannot use public transport without substantial assistance.

Ex Carer Allowance (child) Health Care Card

Assists full-time students with a disability and severe medical condition to access cheaper medicines and some other concessions. The card can be claimed by students in receipt of a Carer Allowance Health Care Card prior to their 16th birthday.

Authorising a nominee

Allows you to act on behalf of your child when dealing with Centrelink. Family members can also register for online services with Centrelink. Phone **Centrelink** on **132 717**
Web www.centrelink.gov.au

More information

Self-directed planning & support, 43

Accessibility

People of all ages and abilities have a right to be included and participate in the community.

Accessibility is about being able to fully participate in life. When thinking about services and support, remember that the full range of services in the community is available to all families. This can include local sporting clubs, events and a wide range of other activities. Your family's participation also helps to broaden the community's diversity and understanding and acceptance of varying abilities. Local governments play an important role in providing an accessible environment for everyone in the community. **See page 37.**

Victorian Building Authority

Oversees the building control system in Victoria and provides information about accessibility in the built environment as well as a complaints service.

Phone **1300 815 127**

Web **www.vba.vic.gov.au**

SCOPE Building Advisory Service (BAS)

Advises on access related issues in new and existing buildings and community facilities.

Phone **9843 2094**

Web **www.scopevic.org.au**

Play Australia

Works to promote safe and developmentally appropriate play experiences for children.

Phone **8846 4111**

Web **www.playaustralia.org.au**

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) National

A free 24-hour, seven day a week interpreting service that can assist non-English speakers who need to communicate in English.

Phone **131 450**

Web **www.tsnational.gov.au**

Companion Card

The Companion Card is issued to people with a significant, permanent disability, who can demonstrate that they are unable to access most community activities and venues without attendant care support. A companion can be a paid or unpaid assistant or carer, which may include a friend or family member. The card is recognised by participating organisations called Affiliates. Terms and conditions for both Affiliates and cardholders are available on the Companion Card website.

Phone **1800 650 611** or

TTY 1800 898 888

Web **www.companioncard.org.au**

Victorian State Disability Plan 2013–2016

The Victorian State Disability Plan includes the Victorian Government's ideas to make life better for people with a disability, their families and carers. The plan is part of a set of three documents:

- Victorian State Disability Plan 2013–2016
- Victorian State Disability Plan: implementation plan 2013 and 2014
- The Companion document to the Victorian State Disability Plan 2013–2016.

Phone **1300 880 043**

Web **www.dhs.vic.gov.au**

More information

Disability Act 2006, 35

Local government, 37

Aids & equipment

Aids and equipment such as wheelchairs, standing frames and continence products may assist your child with daily living tasks and independence.

Depending on your child's and family's needs, a therapist may recommend an item or piece of equipment or you may have to find it yourself. Applications for aids and equipment often require an assessment and report from a therapist or health professional.

State-wide equipment program (SWEP)

SWEP provides people who have a permanent or long-term disability with subsidised aids, equipment, home and vehicle modifications to enhance their independence and facilitate community participation. SWEP is funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and administered by Ballarat Health Services.

SWEP incorporates the following programs:

- Aids and Equipment Program (A&EP)
- Continence Aids (CA)
- DisabilityCare Australia (DCA)
- Domiciliary Oxygen Program (DOP)
- Supported Accommodation Equipment Assistance Scheme (SAEAS)
- Top-up fund for children (TFC)
- Vehicle Modification Subsidy Scheme (VMSS)

All programs require your child's treating therapist to confirm that your child has a permanent or long term disability by completing page 4 of the A&EP application form. In many cases, the SWEP subsidy does not cover the full cost of the item and you will need to pay the difference.

Refer to the SWEP website for eligibility requirements and the A&EP guidelines.

State-wide equipment program (SWEP)

Phone **1300 747 937 (PH SWEP)**

Email **swepcentralintake@bhs.org.au**

Web **swep.bhs.org.au**

Aids and Equipment Program (A&EP)

SWEP provides subsidised aids, equipment and home modifications to enhance independence, community participation and to support families and carers in their caring role. Refer to the A&E guidelines on the SWEP website for eligibility requirements.

Specialist Equipment: Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP)

If your child has ongoing high support needs, in addition to the Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS), childcare services may also be able to access additional support through specialist equipment available on loan from a Specialist Equipment Provider. Gowrie Victoria currently contracts SWEP to provide specialist equipment. For more information visit **www.gowrievictoria.org.au/Support/SpecialistEquipment**

Continence Aids (CA)

Subsidised continence aids are available to people who are incontinent as a result of their disability. SWEP will fund continence aids but it will not fund disposable continence pants or pads, drip collectors, colostomy appliances or urinals. People receiving continence products from SWEP may also be eligible for funding from other government continence programs at the same time.

Vehicle Modification Subsidy Scheme (VMSS)

A maximum subsidy of up to \$10,000 over seven years is available to for vehicle modifications. Vehicles must be less than 10 years old and have less than 160,000 kilometres on the odometer. One subsidy per person is available for the modification of the primary vehicle used to transport the person with a disability. To apply for the subsidy you must submit an A&E application form as well as a vehicle modification subsidy scheme prescription form. You will need to have an assessment by a SWEP registered occupational therapist who can complete a prescription form on your behalf. Your child's doctor will also need to certify that your child's disability is permanent or long term. Retrospective payments will not be provided through SWEP. Refer to the SWEP website for eligibility requirements and VMSS guidelines.

Continance Aids Payments Scheme (CAPS)

Provides assistance with the cost of continence products for people aged 5 years or older who have permanent and severe incontinence due to an eligible neurological condition, or permanent and severe incontinence caused by another eligible condition provided they have a valid Centrelink Concession Card. Applications forms are available from any Medicare Australia office, the National Continence Helpline and the Bladder & Bowel website bladderbowel.gov.au

Victorian Continence Resource Centre

Phone **9816 8266**

Web www.continencevictoria.org.au

National Continence Helpline

Phone **1800 330 066**

Web www.continence.org.au

Continence Support Service

Provides assessment and management support on continence issues and a subsidy for continence products. For more information contact the Victorian Continence Resource Centre or see the [Regional Quick Guide](#) for your region.

National Public Toilet Map

Phone **1800 990 646**

Web toiletmap.gov.au

Master Locksmiths Access Key (MLAK)

The MLAK key provides 24-hour access to public toilets, Liberty swing and other public facilities. Phone **9645 9995** or **1800 819 775**
Web www.masterlocksmiths.com.au/mlak.php

Equipment Distribution Centre (EDC), RCH

Provides medical equipment for hire and sale. Phone **9345 5325**
Web www.rch.org.au/edc

Equipment Recycling Network Inc (ERNI)

Phone **9879 5211**
Web www.erni.asn.au

GoKids Mobility Advisory Service

Phone **8311 4009**
Web www.scopevic.org.au

Green PC

Sells refurbished computers to people who might not be able to afford a new computer. Phone **9418 7400**
Web www.greenpc.com.au

Solve Disability Solutions (formerly TADVIC)

Makes and modifies equipment for people with a disability. Phone **9853 8655** or **1300 663 243**
Web solve.org.au

Yooralla Equipment Library

Phone **1300 885 886** or **TTY 9916 5899**
Web www.yooralla.com.au

Yooralla Independent Living Centre

Provides information about assistive technology. Phone **1300 885 886** or **TTY 9314 9001**
Web www.yooralla.com.au/ilc.php

Variety - the Children's Charity

Offers services and equipment to families experiencing disability or disadvantage. Phone **8698 3900**
Web varietyvic.org.au/vic/

More information

Communication & speech, 21

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD)

Children with autism spectrum disorders may need extra support with behaviour, communication and social skills.

Autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) can cause impairments in social interaction and communication and are often associated with unusual behaviours and interests. ASDs are described according to a spectrum that ranges from mild to severe. Children with ASD can benefit from early support so that they can reach their full potential.

Amaze (formerly Autism Victoria)

Amaze is the peak body for ASD in Victoria and provides information, services, counselling, training, events and workshops to families and professionals. Phone **1300 308 699**
Web **www.amaze.org.au**

Helping Children with Autism package

The Australian Government's Helping Children with Autism package is delivered by a range of Commonwealth government departments that provide support including Autism Advisors, funding for early intervention services, PlayConnect Playgroups, Early Days family workshops, an ASD website, and professional development for teachers and school staff.

Autism Advisors

Following diagnosis, families can contact an Autism Advisor for information about eligibility, funding and accessing support. Medicare items for diagnosis and treatment planning are available for children under the age of 13, and for treatment of children under the age of 15. Phone **Autism Advisor Line 1300 424 499**
Web **www.amaze.org.au**

Victorian Autism Specific Early Learning and Care Centre - Margot Prior Wing

Phone **9479 2122**
Web **www.latrobe.edu.au/child/services/aselcc**

Raising Children Network ASD website

Provides evidence based information about autism spectrum disorders including, diagnosis, assessment and therapies.
Web **raisingchildren.net.au/autism**

PlayConnect Playgroups

Phone **1800 171 882**
Web **www.playconnect.com.au**

Early Days Workshops

Phone **1300 307 909**
Web **www.amaze.org.au**

Positive Partnerships Workshops

Web **www.positivepartnerships.com.au**

For more information phone the **ASD Support Helpdesk** on **1800 778 581**
Web **www.dss.gov.au**

Victorian Autism State Plan

The Department of Human Services, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, and Amaze/Autism Victoria worked together in partnership to develop the Autism State Plan that was launched in May 2009, following a statewide consultation process involving people with autism spectrum disorder, their families and other stakeholders. Web **www.dhs.vic.gov.au**

More information

Early childhood services, 9
Behaviour, 18

Behaviour

Most behaviour is an attempt to communicate some kind of emotional, intellectual or physical need.

Most children display inappropriate behaviour at some time. It can be a healthy part of growing up and testing the boundaries of what is acceptable. In some children, severe behaviours may indicate an underlying issue or some other difficulty.

Behaviours of concern can affect a child's ability to cope with stress, solve problems and enjoy everyday activities with family and friends. Acting early to understand and address the behaviour can prevent more serious issues later in life.

Support is available for children who have not been diagnosed with a specific disability and for children who have mental health issues in addition to other disabilities. If your child attends an early childhood intervention service, they may be able to assist with behaviour support. **See page 9.**

The best outcomes are usually achieved when everyone supporting the child takes the time to identify the causes of the behaviour and develops a positive approach based on the child's strengths and abilities.

Student Support Services

Schools have a responsibility to support students to behave appropriately and to provide a safe environment for both staff and students. Student Support Services Officers in schools can include guidance officers, psychologists, social workers, visiting teachers and curriculum consultants.

In addition to addressing a student's learning needs, planning with the Student Support Group can also include developing a Behaviour Support Plan. **See page 27.**

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Provide free assessment and treatment of children and adolescents experiencing significant psychological distress or mental illness. Assistance can include crisis assessment, case management, individual, family and group therapy, parent support and medication.

Web www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealth/services/child/index.htm

Mental Health Care Plan

Your GP can make referrals to other services and support such as a psychologist, psychiatrist or paediatrician. **See page 22.**

Behaviour Support Services

Behaviour support services deliver therapeutic strategies to prevent the occurrence of behaviours of concern. These are behaviours that are a barrier to a person participating in and contributing to their community and pose a risk to the health and safety of a person and the community. This can include aggressive, self injurious, anti social or dangerous behaviours.

Behaviour support services are delivered by practitioners in DHS, community service organisations or private practitioners. Behaviour support services teams (sometimes know as Specialist Services Teams or Behaviour Intervention Services Teams) use techniques that maximise quality of life and reduce behaviours of concern. Phone your regional **Disability Intake and Response Service on 1800 783 783.**

The Senior Practitioner

The Senior Practitioner understands that most families and carers find it challenging to care for a child with a disability who shows behaviours of concern, and may sometimes use restraints and seclusion as a last resort.

The Office of the Senior Practitioner can work with families and service providers to find positive alternative solutions to support children in a better way than the use of restraints or seclusion. The Senior Practitioner's vision is for an inclusive and safe community that supports people to achieve dignity without restraints.

The Senior Practitioner is responsible for protecting the rights of persons who are subject to restrictive interventions and compulsory treatment and that appropriate standards in relation to restrictive interventions and compulsory treatment are complied with. Disability Act 2006, s.23 (2) (a)

In Victoria, the Disability Act 2006 states that restraint and seclusion should only be used where the person poses a risk of harm to themselves or others, and restraining or secluding is the least restrictive option available. The Disability Act 2006 defines three kinds of restrictive practices: mechanical, chemical and seclusion.

An online application for a review by the Office of the Senior Practitioner of matters regarding support provided to a person with a disability subject to restrictive interventions or compulsory treatment in receipt of a disability service is available on the DHS website.

For more information phone **9096 8427** or visit **www.dhs.vic.gov.au**

Signposts for Building Better Behaviour

Helps families manage and prevent behaviours of concern in children aged 3 to 15 years who have developmental delay or a disability.

Phone **8660 3562**

Web **www.signposts.net.au**

Triple P Parenting Program

Provides parenting and family support to enhance parent knowledge, skills and confidence in raising pre-adolescent children.

Phone **07 3236 1212**

Web **www.triplep-parenting.net**

Brainlink

Provides information and programs for individuals and carers affected by an acquired brain injury.

Phone **1800 677 579**

Web **www.brainlink.org.au**

Statewide Acquired Brain Injury Paediatric Consultants

Assists people aged 0 to 18 with an acquired brain injury to access services and support.

Phone **9487 9250**

Web **www.melbournecitymission.org.au**

Melbourne Case Management Services

Supports people aged 5 to 65 who have received compensation as a result of an acquired brain injury and who have an Individualised Support Package or are able to self-fund services.

Phone **9487 9242**

Web **www.melbournecitymission.org.au**

Statewide Acquired Brain Injury Case Management Service

Supports people aged 18 to 64 who have had an ABI for less than two years and received no compensation as a result of an acquired brain injury.

Phone **8625 9945**

Web **www.melbournecitymission.org.au**

More information

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD), 17
Education, 26
Counselling and support, 22

Child care

If you need to access child care, the child care service may be eligible for additional support.

Child care is available to all families, including families of children with a disability. The cost of care will depend on the type of service you choose. You may be eligible for Child Care Benefit, Child Care Rebate, Jobs, Education and Training (JET) Child Care Fee Assistance, Family Tax Benefit, Parental Leave Pay or Baby Bonus and other government payments. For more information phone the Department of Human Services (DHS) on **136 150** or visit www.humanservices.gov.au

Family day care is where children are looked after in the home of an approved carer.

In-home care is for families who cannot access a standard child care service or where child care services do not meet their needs.

Outside school hours care (also known as Before and After School Care or Vacation Care) is for primary aged children or children of any age in special or emergency situations.

Inclusion Support Subsidy

Child care services may be eligible for additional support to create an inclusive environment for all children through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP). A Professional Support Co-ordinator will work with the child care service to develop a Service Support Plan that identifies the need for additional support. This can include extra staff, resources, training, equipment or an extra payment for home-based carers.

Once a Service Support Plan is approved, the child care service can apply for funding through the Inclusion Support Subsidy which is paid to the child care service. In addition to the Inclusion Support Subsidy, child care services may also be able to access additional support through Flexible Support Funding, Bicultural Support, Specialist Equipment and the General Resource Library.

Child Care Access Hotline

Provides information about child care and government financial assistance.
Phone **1800 670 305**

For more information phone the Child Care Access Hotline or visit education.gov.au/inclusion-and-professional-support-program.

My Child website

Web www.mychild.gov.au

Community Child Care Association

Advocates for community-owned children's services.
Phone **1800 177 017**
Web www.cccinc.org.au

Family Day Care Australia

National organisation for family day care.
Phone **1800 621 218**
Web www.familydaycare.com.au

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

Provides a National Quality Framework that sets levels of safety and quality to benefit all children and their families who use approved education and care services.
Phone **1300 422 327**
Web www.acecqa.gov.au

National In-home Childcare Association

National organisation for in-home child care.
Phone **02 6026 3899**
Web www.nica.org.au

More information

Respite care, 42

Communication & speech

All children can be supported to communicate their thoughts, feelings, needs and dreams, and to interact with the world around them.

Children with complex communication needs may be able to communicate using sign and gesture, pictures, technology, speech therapy or a combination of these.

Electronic Communication Devices Scheme

A state-wide service supporting people who have no speech or speech that is difficult to understand, to buy speech generating devices and software, administered through the Statewide equipment program (SWEP). **See page 15.**

Phone **9362 6111**

Web **www.yooralla.com.au**

ComTEC

Provides an advisory service, equipment library, online resources, education and training.

Phone **9362 6111** or **1300 885 886 (regional)**

Web **www.yooralla.com.au**

Communication Resource Centre, SCOPE

Provides information, resources and services about communication disabilities.

Phone **9843 2000**

Web **www.scopevic.org.au**

Key Word Sign Australia

Phone **02 4921 6293**

Web **www.newcastle.edu.au/research-centre/special-education/key-word-sign-australia/**

Australian Hearing Services

Phone **1300 412 512**

Web **www.hearing.com.au**

Deaf Children Australia

Phone **1800 645 916**

Web **www.deafchildreinaustralia.org.au**

Communication Rights Australia

Phone **9555 8552** or **8948**

Web **www.caus.com.au**

Speech pathology

Speech pathologists can assist with any aspect of communication including speech, writing, reading, signs, symbols and gestures as well as with difficulties swallowing food and drink. Children can access speech therapy through early childhood intervention services (ECIS), school or specialist providers. For more information contact **Speech Pathology Australia (Vic)** on **1300 368 835** or **9642 4899** or visit **www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au**

Anne McDonald Centre

Phone **9509 6324**

Web **www.annemcdonaldcentre.org.au**

National Relay Service

Phone **Voice 1800 555 660**

TTY 1800 555 630 or **SMS 0416 001 350**

Web **relayservice.com.au**

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)

Phone **9314 5374**

Web **www.pecsaustralia.com**

Telstra Disability Equipment Program

Phone **1800 068 424** or **TTY 1800 808 981**

Web **www.telstra.com.au**

Vision Australia

Phone **1300 847 466**

Web **www.visionaustralia.org**

More information

Aids and equipment, 15
Disability-specific groups, 24

Counselling & support

Support from services and from other parents is available to help you and your family through difficult times.

Every family situation is different and everyone responds differently to challenges in life. Sometimes it can help to talk about things with someone who really understands. This can happen informally by talking with other parents and friends or more formally by talking with a health professional.

Most hospitals have social workers and other services to assist families of children with a disability. There are also many private psychologists and counsellors. School Welfare Officers can provide counselling for children at school. Assistance with the cost of counselling may be available through Flexible Support Packages (see page 43), your Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centre (see page 42) or private practitioners covered by private health insurance. Some Community Health Centres offer low-cost counselling (see page 6).

Mental Health Care Plan

Anyone who has a mental health condition that lasts longer than six months and needs the care of several providers may benefit from a Mental Health Care Plan. The plan explains the support given by each provider and is done in consultation with your doctor.

Medicare will cover some or all of the cost of care planning by a doctor and may rebate some of the costs of specialists or other health professionals. Ask your doctor or mental health professional for more information.
Web www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement

Bereavement information and referral service.
Phone **1800 642 066** or **9265 2100**
Web www.grief.org.au

National Carer Counselling Program

Provides free short-term counselling for parents and carers. Your GP or case manager can make a referral or you can contact the service yourself.
Phone **1800 242 636**
Web www.carersvictoria.org.au

Amaze (formerly Autism Victoria)

Provides family counselling.
Phone **9657 1616**
Web www.amaze.org.au

Beyond Blue

Provides support for depression and anxiety.
Phone **1300 224 636**
Web www.beyondblue.org.au

Family Bereavement Support Programme, RCH

Provides support for bereaved families.
Phone **9345 6111**
Web www.rch.org.au/socialwork

Family Planning Victoria

Provides information about sexual and reproductive health care.
Phone **9257 0100**
Web www.fpv.org.au

Family Relationships Advice Line

Provides support for family relationship issues.
Phone **1800 050 321**
Web www.familyrelationships.gov.au

Family Relationship Services for Carers

Provides support for carers around future planning.
Phone the Family Relationship Advice Line on **1800 050 321**
Web www.frsa.org.au

Genetic Support Network Victoria (GSNV)

Provides information and support for families affected by a genetic condition.
Phone **8341 6315**
Web **www.gsnv.org.au**

Griefline

Telephone and online counselling service.
Phone **1300 845 745** or **9935 7400**
Web **www.griefline.org.au**

Headspace

Provides health advice, support and information for young people aged 12 to 25.
Phone **9027 0100** (national office) or see website for details of headspace centres
Web **www.headspace.org.au**

Kids Helpline

24-hour telephone and online counselling for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years.
Phone **1800 551 800**
Web **www.kidshelp.com.au**

Lifeline

24-hour telephone and online counselling.
Phone **131 114**
Web **www.lifeline.org.au**

MensLine Australia

24-hour telephone counselling service for men.
Phone **1300 789 978**
Web **www.mensline.org.au**

Mindhealthconnect website

Online gateway to mental health services.
Web **mindhealthconnect.org.au**

MyTime groups

Provide local support and parenting information for anyone caring for a child with a disability or chronic medical condition.
Phone **1800 889 997**
Web **www.mytime.net.au**

Parentline Victoria

Telephone counselling service for parents and carers of children aged 0–18.
Phone **132 289**
Web **www.parentline.vic.gov.au**

Relationships Australia

Provides relationship support.
Phone **1300 364 277**
Web **www.relationships.org.au**

Sids and Kids NSW and Victoria

Provides support for families affected by the sudden death of a child.
Phone **1800 240 400**
Web **www.sidsandkidseastcoast.org**

The Australian Psychological Society

Provides contact details for psychologists.
Phone **8662 3300**
Web **www.psychology.org.au**

The Bouverie Centre

Provides family therapy and counselling.
Phone **9385 5100**
Web **www.bouverie.org.au**

The Compassionate Friends

24-hour grief support for bereaved families.
Phone **9888 4944** or **1800 641 091 (rural)**
www.compassionatefriendsvictoria.org.au

Very Special Kids

Supports children with a life limiting condition.
Phone **9804 6222** or **1800 888 875**
Web **www.vsk.org.au**

Victorian Paediatric Palliative Care Program

Supports children with life limiting conditions.
Phone **9345 5374**
Web **www.rch.org.au/rch_palliative**

Victorian Centres against Sexual Assault (CASA)

Supports victims of sexual assault.
Phone **1800 806 292**
Web **www.casa.org.au**

Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service

24-hour telephone support and intervention.
Phone **1800 015 188** or **9322 3555**
Web **www.wdvcs.org.au**

WIRE – Women's Information

Free information and support for women.
Phone **1300 134 130**
Web **www.wire.org.au**

Disability-specific groups

Joining a disability-specific group is one way to connect with other families, share information and build your support network.

There are many local and regional disability-specific groups that meet in person as well as a range of online groups and forums. Find out what works for you and how they might become part of your support network.

In addition to joining ACD, we encourage families to join any relevant statewide disability-specific groups. Our aim is to work together on issues that reach across all disabilities.

ARAFEMI

Supports people with a mental illness and their carers.

Phone **1300 550 265**

Web **www.arafemi.org.au**

Asperger's Victoria

Phone **9845 2766**

Web **www.aspergersvic.org.au**

Australian Leukodystrophy Support Group

Phone **9845 2831** or

1800 141 400 (rural callers)

Web **www.alds.org.au**

Amaze (formerly Autism Victoria)

Phone **1300 308 699**

Web **www.amaze.org.au**

Autistic Family Support Association (AFSA)

Phone **0428 938 794**

Web **www.afsaconnect.org.au**

Brainlink

Phone **1800 677 579**

Web **www.brainlink.org.au**

Searching for disability and health information in the Internet

When searching for health and medical information on the Internet:

- Check that the site is run by a reputable organisation before you trust its content.
- Check that the information is current.
- Be mindful of the difference between 'advertising' and 'information', particularly if the site is trying to sell you products or services.
- Look for balanced information that lists both risks and benefits of treatment or therapies.
- Visit the 'Links' page as these often include other sources of information.
- Follow up with your GP or health professional before acting on any online health or medical information.

In addition to information from your GP or health professional, the following websites provide information on a range of disabilities and conditions.

Better Health Channel

Web **www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au**

Raising Children Network

Web **raisingchildren.net.au**

Health Direct Australia

Web **healthdirect.gov.au**

Cerebral Palsy Support Network

Phone **1300 277 600**

Web **www.cpsn.info**

CleftPALS Victoria

Phone **0425 784 130**

Web **www.cleftpalsvic.com**

Cri Du Chat Support Group of Australia

Phone **9775 9962**

Web **www.criduchat.asn.au**

Cystic Fibrosis Victoria

Phone **9686 1811**

Web **www.cysticfibrosis.org.au/vic/**

Deaf Children Australia

Phone **1800 645 916** or **9539 5300**

Web **www.deafchildrenaustralia.org.au**

Down Syndrome Victoria

Phone **1300 658 873** or **9486 9600**

Web **www.downsyndromevictoria.org.au**

Epilepsy Foundation of Victoria

Phone **1300 852 853** or **8809 0600**

Web **www.epinet.org.au**

Fragile X Association of Australia (Vic)

Phone **1300 394 636**

Web **www.fragilex.org.au**

Genetic Support Network Victoria (GSNV)

Phone **8341 6315**

Web **www.gsnv.org.au**

Independence Australia

Provides specialised support services for people with a disability or physical need.

Phone **1300 704 456**

Web **www.independenceaustralia.com**

Life's Little Treasures Foundation

Supports families of premature and sick babies.

Phone **1300 697 736**

Web **www.lifeslittletreasures.org.au**

Muscular Dystrophy Association

Phone **9320 9555**

Web **www.mda.org.au**

National Organisation for Rare Disorders (NORD) US

Web **www.rarediseases.org**

Prada-Willi Association of Victoria

Phone **0451 797 284**

Web **www.pws.asn.au**

Scope Victoria

Phone **9843 3000**

Web **www.scopevic.org.au**

SPELD Victoria

Supports people with dyslexia and learning difficulties.

Parent Information Line **1800 051 533**

Phone **9480 4422**

Web **www.speldvic.org.au**

Spinal Muscular Atrophy Association of Australia

Phone **9545 3633**

Web **www.smaaustralia.com**

Spina Bifida Foundation Victoria

Phone **9663 0075**

Web **www.sbfv.org.au**

Syndromes Without a Name (SWAN)

Phone **0404 280 441**

Web **www.swanaus.com.au**

Tourette Syndrome Association of Australia

Phone **02 9382 3726**

Web **www.tourette.org.au**

Vision Australia

Phone **1300 847 466**

Web **www.visionaustralia.org.au**

Yooralla

Phone **9666 4500**

Web **www.yooralla.com.au**

More information

Visit **www.acd.org.au** for links to other disability-specific groups.

Education

A positive school experience requires planning and good communication by everyone involved in your child's education.

An effective parent-school partnership is the key to a positive school experience for your child. This requires a strong commitment by both parents and schools to working together as partners in your child's education.

By establishing and maintaining good communication with the school, you can effectively plan for the year ahead, address issues as they arise, measure progress and celebrate your child's achievements.

Transition to school

When planning for your child's transition to school, allow plenty of time to look at different schools and attend open days. Make an appointment with the principal to discuss how the school can support your child.

If your child attends an early childhood intervention service, ask them about completing a Transition Learning and Development Statement which assists teachers to get to know your child before they start school.

For more information visit www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/transition/Pages/transition.aspx

Sharing Our Journey Information Kit

For families of children with severe disabilities who receive a Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services package. Phone **1800 809 834**
Web www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/parents/transition/sharingourjourney.pdf

Positive Education Planning resource

Supporting children with a disability in Victorian government primary schools



Provides information about developing positive parent-school partnerships, Student Support Groups, Individual Learning Plans, Supports for children with a disability, Raising a concern, Advocating for your child, and more. The planning principles outlined in this booklet can also be applied to other school settings.

Web www.acd.org.au

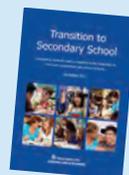
Inclusive Classroom School Resource

An online resource for teachers that includes information, videos, family stories and links to enhance the inclusion of children with a disability at school.

Web www.acd.org.au

Transition to Secondary School resource

Supporting students with a disability in the transition to Victorian government secondary schools



Transition to Secondary School provides information on all aspects of school transition from choosing a secondary school and planning for the right supports to be in place, to developing positive partnerships and raising concerns.

Web www.acd.org.au

Choosing a school

All children have a right to attend their local school. There are government schools, independent schools, Catholic schools and specialist schools. Support for children with a disability in government schools is guided by a process of regular planning by the Student Support Group. A similar planning process can be used for independent and Catholic schools. If you choose to enrol your child in two schools, this is known as dual enrolment.

Choosing a Primary School

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/primary/pages/choosing.aspx

Find a school website

www.education.vic.gov.au/findaservice

My School website

Web www.myschool.edu.au

Catholic Education Commission

Phone **9267 0228**

Web <http://web.cecv.catholic.edu.au>

Independent Schools Victoria

Phone **9825 7200**

Web www.is.vic.edu.au

Starting Primary School

Web www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/primary/Pages/starting.aspx

Starting Secondary School

Web www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/secondary/Pages/starting.aspx

Home schooling

In Victoria, home schooling is a recognised alternative to attending school but you must register your child with the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority.

Victorian Registration & Qualifications Authority

Phone **9637 2806**

Web www.vrqa.vic.gov.au

Distance Education Centre Victoria

Phone **1800 133 511**

Web www.distance.vic.edu.au

Home-Based Educational Support Program

Supports schools to provide students with severe disabilities with an educational program when they are unable to attend school due to the nature of their disability and health needs. Web www.education.vic.gov.au

Victorian Parents Council

Provides information, support and advocacy about education in non-government schools. Phone **9592 0894**
Web www.vicparentscouncil.vic.edu.au

The Bar None Community Awareness Kit for Schools

Provides information and curriculum support for teachers to enhance their knowledge and understanding of disability. Web www.dhs.vic.gov.au

Student Support Group (SSG)

The Student Support Group is a group of people who come together to form a co-operative partnership to support students with additional learning needs. A Student Support Group is available to any student with additional learning needs.

Student Support Group Guidelines

Information about the aims and responsibilities of the group are detailed in the Student Support Group Guidelines published by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD).

The aims of the Student Support Group are to:

- ensure that those with the most knowledge of, and responsibility for the student, work together to establish shared goals for the student's educational future
- plan reasonable adjustments for the student to access the curriculum
- provide educational planning that is ongoing throughout the student's life
- monitor the progress of the student.

Web www.education.vic.gov.au

Individual Learning Plans

An Individual Learning Plan is a working document for the planning, provision and evaluation of your child's education.

In Victorian government schools, all students receiving support through the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) should have an Individual Learning Plan. However, any student who has additional needs may benefit from having an Individual Learning Plan, regardless of their eligibility for the Program for Students with Disabilities.

Everyone involved with your child at school should support your child's Individual Learning Plan. This includes all of your child's teachers across all subject areas, integration aides and co-ordinators, the principal, and Student Support Services Officers such as speech therapists.

The Individual Learning Plan is developed by the Student Support Group and written by your child's school. The plan is a working document that evolves as goals are achieved or modified. The plan should be referred to regularly and adjusted as needed.

Abilities Based Learning and Educational Support (ABLES)

To assist with the development of Individual Learning Plans, teachers now have access to a new suite of tools to better support your child's education. ABLES will allow teachers to better support students by encouraging them to implement the Learning and Teaching Cycle. This requires teachers to: 1. assess 2. gather data 3. plan appropriate learning goals and 4. teach using appropriate selected strategies.

ABLES supports the teacher to base their assessment of your child's needs by focusing on their abilities.

For more information visit www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/ablesintroguide.pdf

Supports for children with a disability at school

Funding support for children with a disability at school is different for government, independent and Catholic schools. Ask the school for more information about the application process and eligibility criteria.

Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD)

The Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) is available to government schools to support the education of eligible students with a moderate to severe disability. There are detailed eligibility criteria and an application process that the Student Support Group must follow.

PSD funds can be used to provide specialist staff, professional development, education support staff, and specialist equipment. The school can apply to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) for building modifications such as ramps and toilet facilities. It is up to the Student Support Group to plan how funds are used and to make recommendations for approval by the principal.

The PSD Handbook and Guidelines are available from www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/pages/handbook.aspx

Autism Friendly Learning

The Autism Friendly Learning website provides links to information about ASD, school supports and specific issues such as transitions. Web www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/needs/Pages/autism.aspx

More information

Raising a concern at your child's school, 39
Conveyance Allowance, 46
Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD), 48

Financial assistance

A range of financial assistance is available to families of children with a disability, most of which is administered by Centrelink.

In addition to payments and benefits that relate directly to 'disability' or 'caring', you may also be eligible for other entitlements, depending on your circumstances.

Allow plenty of time when making any application as there are often detailed eligibility criteria, forms to complete and other supporting information to prepare. It may be helpful to ask friends or family to support you with this. Speaking to other people who have already been through the process can also be helpful.

Make an appointment at your local Centrelink Customer Service Centre to discuss your situation in detail and to pick up any forms and information. You can also register to access some online Centrelink services as a customer and/or a nominee. When your child turns 16, the Centrelink payment system changes. **See page 13.**

Centrelink

Families of children with a disability may be eligible for a range of disability related payments from Centrelink including:

- Carer Allowance (Child)
- Carer Payment (Child), Carer Adjustment Payment
- Child Disability Assistance Payment
- Carer Supplement
- Carer Allowance (Adult)
- Carer Payment (Adult)
- Disability Support Pension
- Mobility Allowance
- Pensioner Education Supplement

For more information phone **Centrelink** on **132 717** or visit **humanservices.gov.au**

Carer Allowance (Child)

A supplementary payment for carers who provide additional daily care and attention for someone with a disability or who is frail aged. This payment is not income or assets tested and can be paid in addition to wages or other Centrelink payments.

Health Care Card

Provides help with the cost of prescription medicine under the PBS, Australian Government funded medical services and access to government concessions.

Health Care Card & fortnightly payment

For children who meet the eligibility criteria or whose needs are below a certain level for their age. You and your doctor must complete separate claim forms from Centrelink.

Child Disability Assistance Payment

An annual payment of up to \$1000 for people who receive Carer Allowance for a child under 16. This payment is not income tested and can be used to purchase support, aids, therapy or respite.

Carer Payment (Child)

An income support payment for people who personally provide constant care in the home of someone with a severe disability, illness or who is frail aged. This payment is income and assets tested.

For more information visit **humanservices.gov.au**

Carer Allowance (Adult)

A supplementary payment for people who care at home for an adult with a disability or severe medical condition or who is frail aged.

Carer Payment (Adult)

An income support payment for people who cannot support themselves through participation in the workforce due to the demands of their caring role. Carer Payment is income and assets tested.

For more information visit www.centrelink.gov.au or humanservices.gov.au

Other Centrelink services

Health Care Card

Entitles you to cheaper medicines and other concessions. You or your child may be eligible for a Health Care Card if you receive certain Centrelink payments such as Carer Allowance (Child).

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) Safety Net Card

If you reach the Safety Net threshold you can apply for a PBS Safety Net Card and your PBS medicine will be less expensive or free for the rest of the calendar year. Phone **1800 020 613**
Web www.pbs.gov.au

Pensioner Concession Card

Entitles you to reduced cost medicines under the PBS and other concessions. People who receive Centrelink payments such as Carer Payment, Disability Support Pension or Parenting Payment (Single) are eligible for a Pensioner Concession Card.

Authorising a Person Permitted to Enquire Form

Authorises a person or organisation to make an enquiry, act or receive payment on your behalf. You can authorise a person to enquire on your behalf in relation to your payment and decisions regarding your payment.

Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme

Provides help for students who cannot go to an appropriate state school because of geographical isolation or because they have a disability or special health needs.

For more information visit humanservices.gov.au

Chronic Disease Individual Allied Health Services under Medicare

A Medicare rebate is available for up to 5 allied health services per calendar year for people with a chronic or terminal medical condition or complex care needs on referral from their GP. Phone **132 011**
Web health.gov.au

Concessions

Concessions are available to eligible people on a low income who cannot pay council rates, water, gas and electricity bills. Phone the Concessions Help Line on **1800 658 521**
Web www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions

Carer Card

The Carer Card program offers discounts from businesses, government and community organisations, free travel on public transport on Sundays and travel vouchers. Phone the Carer Card Hotline on **1800 901 958**
Web carercard.vic.gov.au

Service Clubs, Charities and Foundations

Financial assistance may also be available from service clubs, charities and foundations either directly or through an organisation.

More information

Turning 16 and Centrelink, 13
Net Medical Expenses Tax Offset, 31

Health & medical

A reliable source of health and medical information for your child and family is your local doctor or GP.

Your GP may also refer you to a specialist such as a paediatrician or other health professional. Developing a good relationship with health professionals relies on good communication. Ask for things to be explained in words you understand and don't be afraid to ask for information to be repeated. You can also ask for more information or a second opinion.

Accelerated Care through Emergency (ACE) Program, RCH

Provides care co-ordination and 24 hour phone support to assist families to manage their child at home or to fast track admission to RCH.

Phone **9345 6159** (office) or **0409 882 197** (on call)

Web www.rch.org.au/pfc/programs

Safety Resource Centre, RCH

Phone **9345 5085**

Web www.rch.org.au/safetycentre

Family Resource and Respite Centre, RCH

Phone **9345 4662** or **4660**

Web www.rch.org.au/frc

RCH@Home

Provides support services in the home and community for children aged 0-18 years.

Phone **9345 5695 (Parkville)** or **9345 9410 (Hawthorn)**

Web www.rch.org.au/hacc/

Gastrostomy Information Support Service

Phone **9843 2011**

Web www.scopevic.org.au

Home Enteral Nutrition (HEN) Program

Ask your GP or hospital for more information.

NURSE-ON-CALL

Phone **1300 606 024**

There's No Such Thing as a Silly Question booklet

A guide for families living with a child with chronic illness, disability, mental illness or life-threatening condition.

Phone **9804 6222** or **1800 888 875**

Web www.vsk.org.au

Very Special Kids

Supports children with a life limiting condition.

Phone **9804 6222** or **1800 888 875**

Web www.vsk.org.au

Medicare Allied Health and Dental Care

People with a chronic condition and complex care needs being managed by their doctor under an Chronic Disease Management plan can access Medicare rebates for allied health services and dental services.

Ask your GP for more information.

Phone **Medicare** on **132 011**

Web www.health.gov.au

Net Medical Expenses Tax Offset

Net medical expenses are the medical expenses you have paid less any refunds from Medicare or a private health insurer. The percentage of net medical expenses you can claim is determined by your adjusted taxable income and family status.

Phone the **Australian Tax Office** on **132 861**

Web www.ato.gov.au

More information

Therapy, 45

Victorian Patient Transport

Assistance Scheme (VPTAS), 47

Housing & accommodation

Housing support can include home modifications as well as options for long-term accommodation for young adults with a disability.

Creating and maintaining a place to call home can involve a combination of modifications and support services.

Home Renovation Service

Provides free home inspections for homeowners or renters who hold either a current Commonwealth Health Care Card or a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card and have a disability or are permanently caring for someone with a disability. Home owners may be eligible for financial assistance with a Home Renovation loan. Phone Archicentre Home Services on **9815 1900** or **1300 136 513**
Web www.dhs.vic.gov.au

Outreach Support

Provides up to 15 hours per week of home and community based support so that people with a disability can live outside staffed residential accommodation, remain living in their own homes or move to more independent living arrangements. Phone your regional **Disability Intake and Response Service** on **1800 783 783**.

Social Housing Advocacy & Support Program (SHASP)

Provides support to public housing tenants to maintain their housing and prevent homelessness. Phone the Tenants Union of Victoria on **1800 068 860**
Web www.dhs.vic.gov.au

Housing Choices Australia

Creates safe, quality, affordable housing for people who are disadvantaged. Phone **1300 312 447**
Web www.hcau.org.au

Accommodation options for people with a disability include:

- Support to live in your own home, or the family home through an Individual Support Package
- Support for younger people at risk of admission to residential aged care (my future my choice)
- Shared Supported Accommodation

Phone your regional **Disability Intake and Response Service** on **1800 783 783**.

Movable Units

Self-contained units that can be set up in the back yard of a friend or relatives home. Phone **1800 460 505**
Web www.dhs.vic.gov.au

EW Tipping Foundation

Provides in-home and community based services for people with a disability. Phone **9564 1000**
Web www.tipping.org.au

Special Disability Trusts

A Special Disability Trust can be set up by parents and immediate family to plan for the future care and accommodation needs of a person with a severe disability. Phone **1800 734 750**
Web www.humanservices.gov.au

More information

Young adults, 12
Disability Support Register, 43

Information & advocacy

A number of statewide and national organisations provide disability information and advocacy.

Information

There are many ways to find and access information. This may include reading print publications, online resources, using telephone information lines and finding out about services and support by word of mouth.

Most local libraries provide public Internet access and assistance with learning how to use the Internet to find information. Most websites have a 'search' function that you can use by entering key words that describe the information you are looking for.

Disability-specific groups provide information and some may also be able to assist with advocacy. **See page 21.**

Many regional community services organisations publish their own information directories with details of local services and support.

Regional Parent Support Co-ordinator

Provides information about local services and support. **See page 48.**

Better Health Channel

Web www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Raising Children Network website

Web raisingchildren.net.au

Health Direct Australia

Web www.healthdirect.gov.au

Infoxchange Australia

Phone **9418 7400**

Web www.infoxchange.net.au

MyChild website

Web www.mychild.gov.au

Self Advocacy Resource Unit (SARU)

Provides information and resources to self advocacy groups.

Phone **SARU on 9639 6856**

Web www.saru.net.au

Disability Advocacy Resource Unit (DARU)

Provides resource to the disability advocacy sector in Victoria

Phone **DARU on 9639 5807**

Web www.daru.org.au

Community Information and Support Victoria

Phone **9672 2000**

Web www.cisvic.org.au

Parent to Parent: Raising your child with special needs resource

Web www.deakin.edu.au/dhs/parent_to_parent

DiVine website

An online community for and by people with a disability.

Web www.divine.vic.gov.au

Kids Health Info Bookshop, RCH

Sells books and co-ordinates a listing of Victorian parent support groups.

Phone **9345 6429**

Web www.rch.org.au/chas

Victorian Aboriginal Health Service (VAHS)

Phone **9419 3000**

Web www.vahs.org.au

Advocacy

Action for More Independence and Dignity in Accommodation (AMIDA)

Phone 9650 2722

Web www.amida.org.au

Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities (ADEC)

Phone 9480 1666 or 1800 626 078

Web www.adec.org.au

Belonging Matters

Phone 9739 8333

Web www.belongingmatters.org

Blind Citizens Australia

Phone 9654 1400 or 1800 033 660

Web bca.org.au

Brain Injury Matters

Phone 9639 7222

Web www.bim.org.au

Children with Disability Australia

Phone 9482 1130 or 1800 222 660

(regional or interstate)

Web www.cda.org.au

Communication Rights Australia

Phone 9555 8552 or 8948

Web www.caus.com.au

Defence Special Needs Support Group

Phone 1800 037 674

Web dsnsg.org.au

Disability Justice Advocacy

Phone 1800 808 126 or 9474 0077

Web www.justadvocacy.com

Disability Resources Centre (DRC)

Phone 9671 3000

Web www.drc.org.au

FKA Children's Services

Phone 9428 4471

Web www.fka.com.au

Leadership Plus

Phone 9489 2999

Web www.leadershipplus.com

National Association for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN)

Phone 8073 3300

Web napcan.org.au

Social Security Rights Victoria

Phone 9481 0355 or

1800 094 164 (rural callers)

Web www.ssrv.org.au

Parents Victoria

Phone 9380 2158 or

1800 032 023 (rural callers)

Web www.parentsvictoria.asn.au

Star Victoria

Phone 9650 2730

Web www.starvictoria.org.au

Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALID)

Phone 9416 4003 or

1800 655 570 (rural callers)

Web www.valid.org.au

VICSEG New Futures

Phone 9383 2533

Web www.vicsegnewfutures.org.au

Victorian Aboriginal Education Association (VAEAI)

Phone 9481 0800

Web www.vaeai.org.au

Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS)

Phone 9267 3755 (co-ordinator)

9267 3733 (individual advocate)

1300 727 176 (for rural callers)

TTY via the National Relay Service 133 677

SMS 0412 814 851

Web www.ydas.org.au

More information

Disability-specific groups, 24

Parent advocacy, 40

Legal services

Legal services may be able to assist with a range of issues including discrimination, service quality, guardianship, wills and estate planning.

There can be many reasons for seeking legal advice. If you have a concern about the quality of a service or want to make a complaint, it's best to approach the service in question first to give them an opportunity to resolve the issue before you seek legal advice. **See page 38.**

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

Provides a free telephone Enquiry Line and an impartial no-cost complaint handling process for people who may have experienced discrimination, victimisation, sexual harassment, racial or religious vilification. Phone **1300 292 153** or **9032 3583** or **TTY 1300 289 621**
www.humanrightscormission.vic.gov.au

AED Legal Centre

Advocates to assist people with a disability in employment, education and training. Phone **9639 4333**
Web **www.aed.org.au**

Attorney-General's Department

Provides information about Australia's legal and justice system, including family law and disability discrimination. Web **www.ag.gov.au**

Child Protection Crisis Line

24-hour emergency service for immediate concerns about the safety of a child. Phone **131 278**

Disability Discrimination Legal Service Inc

Statewide independent community legal centre that specialises in disability discrimination. Phone **9654 8644** or **1300 882 872 (rural callers)** or **TTY 9654 6817**
Web **www.communitylaw.org.au/ddls**

Disability Act 2006

The Disability Act 2006 provides a framework for a whole-of-government approach to enable people with a disability to actively participate in the community.

The Act is guided by principles of human rights and citizenship and aims to ensure that services are of a high quality and accountable to people with a disability.

You can view the Act online at **www.legislation.vic.gov.au**

Information Sheets about the Act are available on the Department of Human Services (DHS) website **www.dhs.vic.gov.au**

Federation of Community Legal Centres

Provides legal information and resources and contact details for Community Legal Centres in Victoria. Phone **9652 1500**
Web **www.fclc.org.au**

Law Help Guide

A directory of free and low cost legal services, complaint or dispute settlement serviced and private lawyers. Phone **9604 8100**
Web **www.victorialawfoundation.org.au**

The Law Handbook Online

A practical guide to the law in Victoria. Web **www.lawhandbook.gov.au**

Office of the Public Advocate (OPA)

The OPA is an independent body that works towards a just and inclusive society that values, respects, protects and promotes the dignity and human rights of all persons. Services include:

- Advice Service
- Advocate/Guardian Program
- Community Guardian Program
- Community Visitors Program
- Independent Third Person Program

Phone **1300 309 337**

Web **www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au**

Commission for Children and Young People

The Commission promotes continuous improvement and innovation in:

- policies and practices relating to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people generally, and in particular those who are vulnerable
- the provision of out of home care services for children

The Commission is not an official complaints or review body, but is able to provide information and assistance to people with concerns about the safety and wellbeing of children and young people.

Phone **1300 782 978**

Web **www.ccyp.vic.gov.au**

If you have concerns about the immediate safety and wellbeing of a child or young person, you are advised to call 000 or the Department of Human Services (DHS) office nearest to where the child or young person lives. If you are concerned about the services delivered by DHS you can call the DHS complaints line on **1300 884 706**.

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)

VCAT can make decisions about disputes and has a number of 'lists' (sections) which specialise in particular types of cases. Phone **9628 9900** (Health - Privacy/Disability Act)

Web **www.vcat.vic.gov.au**

Administration and guardianship

Administration is where a person is appointed to make legal and financial decisions for a person with a disability.

Guardianship is where a person is appointed to make personal and lifestyle decisions for an adult (aged 18+) with a disability.

The appointment of an administrator or guardian can occur on application to the VCAT Guardianship List if it is the 'least restrictive' option.

For more information phone the Office of the Public Advocate on

1300 309 337 or visit

www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au

Victoria Legal Aid

Provides free legal advice and publications including 'Securing their future' for parents of children with a decision-making disability.

Phone **1300 792 387**

Web **www.legalaid.vic.gov.au**

Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service

A Community Legal Centre that provides advice only on disability related legal issues.

Phone **1800 014 111**

Web **www.villamanta.org.au**

Working with Children Check

The Working with Children Check helps protect children from harm by preventing those who pose a risk to children from working with them in either paid or voluntary work.

Phone **1300 652 879**

Web **www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au**

More information

Making a complaint, 38

Parent advocacy, 40

Local government

Your local government council or shire is a good place to start for information about local services and support.

Local councils and shires provide a range of child and family services including:

- Home and Community Care (HACC) program (respite care)
- Maternal and Child Health Services
- Child care
- Kindergarten services
- Libraries and toy libraries
- School holiday programs

Most councils and shires publish information directories with contact details of local community groups and services. These directories are often available in print and online. For more information contact your local council or shire.

Disability Action Plan

Local governments play an important role in providing an accessible environment for all members of the community.

As part of the Victorian State Disability Plan 2013–2016, all local governments must develop a Disability Action Plan that supports building an inclusive community for people with a disability. These plans are usually available on council websites or from council offices.

A Disability Advisory Committee oversees implementation of the plan and provides a forum for discussion of issues that affect people with a disability.

The committee is open to people with a disability, their families and carers. For more information contact your local council or shire.

MetroAccess, RuralAccess and Deafaccess Programs

These programs aim to build the capacity of local communities to be welcoming and inclusive of people with a disability. There are MetroAccess and RuralAccess workers in each local government area who work to develop opportunities for greater participation and inclusion of people with a disability. Deafaccess workers are based in five community organisations across rural Victoria.

The programs are initiatives of the Victorian State Disability Plan 2013–2016. For more information contact your local council or shire.

Local Government

Provides links to council websites and information about local government.

Phone **1300 366 356**

Web **www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/localgovernment**

Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)

The peak body representing local councils. Provides links to council websites and information about local government.

Phone **9667 5555**

Web **www.mav.asn.au**

More information

Your local area and region, 2
Respite care, 42
Accessibility, 14

Making a complaint

When making a complaint, it's important to make sure you have all the facts and to follow the right process when trying to resolve the issue.

There may be times when you want to appeal a decision, request a review of your situation or make a complaint about some aspect of the care or service your child or family receives. Your feedback can also help to improve service quality for other families in the future.

As part of the Disability Act 2006, all Registered Disability Service Providers must have a complaints management process in place. Ask the service provider for information about this process to help determine the best way to resolve your complaint.

Complaints about the provision of disability services can be made directly to the service provider and to the Disability Services Commissioner. If you're unable to resolve your complaint or raise it with the service provider, the Disability Services Commissioner can assist.

Quality Framework for Disability Services

Ensures that services and supports for people with a disability are regularly reviewed and meet agreed standards.

Web www.dhs.vic.gov.au

Office of Health Services Commissioner

Provides information and assistance to resolve complaints about health service providers.

Phone **1300 582 113**

Web www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc

Office of the Senior Practitioner

Works with families and service providers to find positive alternative solutions to support children in a better way than the use of restraints or seclusion.

Phone **9096 8427**

Web www.dhs.vic.gov.au/ds/osp

Disability Services Commissioner

The Disability Services Commissioner is an independent body that provides advice and assistance in the resolution of complaints about Victorian disability services.

Phone **1800 677 342 (free call)**

or TTY **1300 726 563**

Web www.odsc.vic.gov.au

National Disability Abuse and Neglect Hotline

A telephone service for reporting cases of neglect or abuse of people with a disability.

Phone **1800 880 052** or TTY **1800 301 130**

Web www.disabilityhotline.net.au

Victorian Ombudsman

Investigates complaints about Victorian Government authorities, including the Department of Human Services (DHS), councils, schools, universities and TAFEs.

In most cases, you will need to make your complaint to the authority first to allow them to resolve the issue. If you are still not satisfied, you can then contact the Victorian Ombudsman.

Phone **9613 6222**

or **1800 806 314 (regional)**

Web ombudsman.vic.gov.au

Commonwealth Ombudsman

Investigates complaints about Australian Government departments and agencies in a similar way to the Victorian Ombudsman.

Phone **1300 362 072**

Web www.ombudsman.gov.au

Raising a concern at your child's school

- Concerns about an issue or incident at school are best addressed by speaking to the teacher in the first instance.
- Get all the facts and be clear about what outcome you are seeking.
- Concerns about your child's program are best addressed by the Student Support Group.
- Concerns about staff or personnel should be directed to the principal.
- Find out if there are any policies or guidelines for addressing your concern.
- Expected standards of behaviour are outlined in Student Engagement Policy Guidelines available from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) website.
- Organise an appropriate time and place for any discussion.
- Put serious concerns in writing to the principal.
- Focus on moving towards positive change.
- Make sure any changes are reviewed and adjusted if needed.
- If there is no positive change, contact DEECD and/or an independent agency.

More information is available from www.education.vic.gov.au. Also see our Positive Education Planning resource on **page 26**, and DEECD Regional Office contact details on **page 49**.

Consumer Affairs Victoria

Provides advice on consumer issues.

Phone **1300 558 181**

Web www.consumer.vic.gov.au

Disability Education Standards

The Disability Standards for Education clarify the obligations of education and training providers and seek to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students. The Standards were formulated under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and came into effect in August 2005.

Web education.gov.au/disability-standards-education

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

Education Standards website

Includes an information booklet 'Your right to an education: A guide for students with a disability, their associates and education providers'.

Web www.ddaedustandards.info

Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria

A free dispute resolutions service that provides mediation and assistance to resolve a wide range of issues without having to take legal action.

Phone **1800 658 528**

Web www.disputes.vic.gov.au

Social Security Appeals Tribunal

An independent statutory body that reviews decisions by the Commonwealth funded Department of Human Services (DHS).

Phone **1800 011 140**

Web www.ssat.gov.au

National Welfare Rights Network

Provides assistance with difficulties with the social security system including appeals of Centrelink decisions.

Phone **9416 1111** or **1800 094 164 (rural callers)**

Web www.welfarerights.org.au

More information

Parent advocacy, 40

Legal services, 35

Parent advocacy

It is common for parents to act as advocates for their child in many situations, even though you might not think of it as advocacy.

An advocate is someone who can support, assist or represent another person to achieve a positive outcome in a difficult situation or meeting.

As a parent, you have the most experience and personal knowledge about your child. If you have a strong instinct about what could improve your child's situation, be firm and persistent. Remember that you are your child's best advocate and you do not have to apologise for standing up for your child.

Sometimes it isn't easy being an advocate for your child. It can be hard work! It may mean developing new skills, learning new words and terminology and asking lots of questions.

With persistence, and the right support, parent advocacy can help you work towards positive outcomes for your child and family.

Individual advocacy is where someone assists you to advocate for the needs of your child and family or takes up a matter on your behalf. Advocates can include friends, family, other parents or professional advocates.

You can take an advocate with you to any meeting. However, to comply with Student Support Group Guidelines, advocates attending an education Program Support Group meeting must not be paid a fee.

Systemic advocacy involves telling governments and decision-makers about changes required to improve the service system for families of children with a disability.

A range of organisations provide information as well as individual and systemic advocacy. **See page 33.**

Tips for being an effective advocate

- Have a clear idea about the outcome you are seeking.
- Prioritise your concerns in case there isn't time to address them all at once.
- Find out who is responsible for the decision and action you are seeking.
- Think about issues that others may raise and how you might respond.
- Don't always expect conflict but be prepared with a positive strategy if there is conflict.
- Listen to other points of view.
- Be prepared to negotiate and accept a compromise if an alternative solution is just as effective.
- Try to stay calm.
- Focus on getting a positive outcome for your child.
- Follow up verbal agreements in writing if needed.
- Keep accurate records about your efforts relating to a specific issue.
- Ask a friend or professional to help you if you need support.
- Seek further information and advice from an advocacy organisation if you need to.

Recreation

When thinking about recreation opportunities for your child, start by identifying what your child enjoys doing.

As for any child, recreation for a child with a disability can involve many different things. A good place to start is by looking at recreation opportunities in your local area that are available to all children.

Access for All Abilities — First Point of Call Service

Connects people with a disability to sports and recreation opportunities.

Phone **1800 222 842**

Web **www.aaavic.org.au**

Reclink Australia

Provides and promotes sport and art programs for people experiencing disadvantage.

Phone **9419 6672**

Web **www.reclink.org**

Disability Sport and Recreation

SportRec Access Line **1800 234 648**

Web **www.dsr.org.au**

Arts Access Victoria

Phone **9699 8299**

Web **artsaccess.com.au**

Australian Camps Association

Phone **9365 7100**

Web **www.auscamps.asn.au**

Nican

Provides information about recreation, tourism, sport and the arts for people with a disability.

Phone **1800 806 769**

Web **www.nican.com.au**

People Outdoors

Phone **9365 7150**

Web **www.peopleoutdoors.org.au**

Playground Finder

Web **www.playgroundfinder.com**

Interchange Victoria

Provides respite and recreational experiences for children with a disability.

Phone **1300 300 436**

Web **www.interchange.org.au**

Riding Develops Abilities

Phone **9258 4730**

Web **www.rdav.asn.au**

Sailability Victoria

Web **www.s4e.org.au/vic**

Contact Yachting Victoria on **9597 0066**

Web **www.yachtingvictoria.com.au**

School holiday programs

Contact your local council or shire.

Special Olympics Victoria

Phone **9877 2769**

Web **www.specialolympics.com.au/vic**

Swimming Victoria

Phone **9686 5222**

Web **vic.swimming.org.au**

VICSRAPID

Phone **9926 1380**

Web **www.vicsrapid.websyte.com.au**

Victorian Electric Wheelchair Sports Association

Phone **9574 8335**

Web **www.vewsa.com.au**

More information

Companion card, 14

Local government, 37

Respite care, 42

Respite care

Respite care refers to a wide range of services that can give families a break from the caring role and provide a positive experience for children.

Families of children with a disability can use respite in a number of different ways. It can involve planned, regular respite as well as assistance for one-off emergency situations. Care can be available for a few hours, overnight, a few days or weeks.

In-home respite is where a paid carer comes into your home.

Out-of-home respite is where your child attends a service and participates in activities outside the home under the supervision of a paid care worker.

Most respite services are provided through state government and community service organisations. Some of these organisations publish regional respite information booklets. The cost of care will depend on the type of respite and the service. For information about local respite services visit www.respitevictoria.org.au

Home and Community Care (HACC) program

A joint federal-state program that provides services to young people with a disability and their carers and people who are frail aged. HACC services can include a combination of in-home respite and personal care. For more information contact your local council or shire or HACC team for assessment.

Interchange Victoria

Provides respite and recreational experiences for children with a disability. Phone **1300 300 436**
Web www.interchange.org.au

Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres

The federal government funds a network of Commonwealth Respite and Carelink Centres that provide information and referral to respite services including emergency and after-hours care. Each region has an allocation of flexible respite funding to provide respite not available through other programs.

Phone **1800 052 222**

or **1800 059 059 (after hours)**

Web www.commcarelink.health.gov.au.

Extended Families Australia

Provides opportunities for volunteers to support children with a disability and their families in a friendship and companionship role.

Phone **9355 8848**

Web www.extendedfamilies.org.au

Foster Care Association of Victoria

Provides information and support to families who care for children in foster care.

Phone **9416 4292**

Web www.fcav.org.au

Very Special Kids

Supports children with a life limiting condition.

Phone **9804 6222** or **1800 888 875**

Web www.vsk.org.au

More information

Local government, 37

Child care, 20

Recreation, 41

Self-directed planning & support, 43

Self-directed planning & support

Self-directed planning describes a process that we already use as parents when we make choices and plan for our family's future.

As parents, we seek a wide range of experiences to enrich the physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural and academic growth of our children. Whenever we find information, identify choices and make decisions, we are using a process of self-directed planning.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) uses a self-directed planning approach to guide the way people access disability supports. This means that families and young people can choose and control the supports they need to achieve their goals and live the way they want to.

Planning & identifying supports

Exploring both formal and informal supports to meet your child and family's needs may include bringing together important people in your child's life, such as family, friends or supporters, to think about and document the supports that are needed and how they can be provided. You can choose to use a facilitator or planner to help you with this process.

The supports you choose can come from DHS disability services as well as community service organisations and may or may not require funding. Funding for ongoing disability supports can be directly managed by you or by a service provider once approved by DHS. It's important that everyone involved in the planning process knows who is responsible for undertaking all actions and tasks.

Flexible Support Packages (FSPs)

These can be short or long term funding packages that provide a range of services to meet your family's needs including respite care, referral, case management, practical support, service co-ordination and discretionary funding.

Assistance with planning

Under the Disability Act 2006, anyone can ask for assistance with planning and people with an intellectual disability must be offered assistance on request.

A series of information sheets about the Disability Act 2006, including Information sheet 4 on Planning for people with a disability, are available from the DHS website www.dhs.vic.gov.au

Disability Support Register (DSR)

If you have ongoing disability support needs, you can discuss and apply to DHS for ongoing support via the Disability Support Register (DSR). The DSR is a mechanism for registering current ongoing need. This can include anything from family or carer support to long-term accommodation needs, but it can only be used to meet a need that your child has now, not at some time in the future.

Individual Support Packages (ISPs)

One outcome of registering on the DSR can be an Individual Support Package of funds allocated to a person to meet their disability related support needs. Funding may complement existing informal support arrangements from family and friends and community service organisations.

For more information phone your regional **Disability Intake and Response Service** on **1800 783 783**, your local community service organisation or visit www.dhs.vic.gov.au

Siblings

Siblings who grow up together with a brother or sister with a disability may face some unique experiences and challenges.

For many siblings with a brother or sister with a disability, life can be challenging while at the same time very rewarding. Sibling experiences are often different from those of their friends.

Parents can support siblings by maintaining good communication and giving them opportunities to connect with other siblings.

ACD resources to support siblings include Growing Together and a Sibling Program Directory.

Sibling Program Directory

Sibling programs provide opportunities for siblings to connect with other siblings or young people with caring responsibilities by attending a group, camp or other activities.

The Sibling Program Directory lists sibling programs available in Victoria. Most programs have eligibility criteria and some charge a fee.

Phone **9818 2000** or

1800 654 013 (rural callers)

Web **www.acd.org.au**

Siblings Australia

Provides information and support for siblings.

Web **www.siblingsaustralia.org.au**

Interchange Victoria

Runs sibling programs across Victoria.

Phone **1300 300 436**

Web **www.interchange.org.au**

Livewire

An online community for young people living with a serious illness, chronic health condition or disability, and their families.

Phone **02 8425 5971**

Web **www.livewire.org.au**

Growing Together resource

Growing Together is written for parents and highlights the experiences of siblings growing up with a brother or sister with a disability. The booklet includes strategies for parents to support siblings, stories written by parents and siblings and a list of resources. Copies are available from the Association office or **www.acd.org.au**



National Carer Counselling Program

Provides free short-term counselling for parents and carers, including young carers.

Phone **1800 242 636**

Web **www.carersvictoria.org.au**

Very Special Kids

Runs a range of activities for siblings of children with a life limiting illness.

Phone **9804 6222 or 1800 888 875**

Web **www.vsk.org.au/our-services/sibling-support**

Young Carers

Provides information and support for young carers.

Phone **1800 242 636**

Web **www.youngcarers.net.au**

More information

Counselling & support, 22

Disability-specific groups, 24

Therapy

Therapy provides specialist support based on individual planning and needs that assists children to maximise their development.

Many children with a disability can benefit from some type of therapy such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy or speech therapy. There are also therapies that provide specialised support for specific disabilities as well as a broad range of complementary therapies.

If your child is of school age, discuss their therapy needs with the school as part of planning with the Student Support Group. **See page 27.**

You can sometimes access physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy services through Community Health Centres, hospitals or early intervention services.

Ask your doctor or health professional for information about private therapists. Funding towards the cost of therapy may be available through Individual or Flexible Support Packages or private health insurance.

Australian Physiotherapy Association (APA)

Physiotherapists use manual therapies, electrotherapy and exercise programs to enhance mobility. You can find registered physiotherapists in your area using the 'Find a physio' search function on the APA website. Phone **9092 0888**
Web **www.physiotherapy.asn.au**

Occupational Therapy (OT) Australia

Occupational therapists work with children with any condition, disability or impairment that affects their ability to perform everyday activities. You can find registered occupational therapists in your area using the 'Find an OT' search function on the OT Australia website. Phone **9416 1421**
Web **www.otaus.com.au**

Parent Guide to Therapies for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD)

The Raising Children Network website includes information about a range of therapies and interventions for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

Each guide gives an overview of the therapy, what the research says about the therapy and the approximate time and costs involved.
Web **raisingchildren.net.au/autism**

Scope Victoria

Provides a range of early years and school age therapy programs across Victoria. Scope also provides some free resources to support people with a disability. Phone **9843 3000**
Web **www.scopevic.org.au**

Yooralla

Provides a range of early years and school age therapy, recreation and respite programs across Victoria. Phone **1300 9667 2552**
Web **www.yooralla.com.au**

More information

Autism spectrum disorders (ASD), 17
Communication & speech, 21
Disability-specific groups, 24
Health & medical, 31
Self-directed planning & support, 43

Transport

Whether your child is travelling to and from school or just out and about, a range of travel assistance and concessions are available.

Most children who attend specialist schools are eligible for free bus transport to and from school within a designated transport zone. Eligible children may attend a school outside the zone but will not receive transport assistance. For more information ask the school for information about their transport policy.

Conveyance Allowance

Students with severe multiple disabilities may be eligible for Conveyance Allowance to assist with travel costs to and from school. Schools must submit conveyance claims online to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) each semester. Guidelines and application forms are available from the DEECD website www.education.vic.gov.au

Taxis

Wheelchair accessible taxis (Melbourne)

Phone **Silver Top Taxis** on **8413 7202**

Web www.silvertop.com.au

Phone **9277 3877** or **136 294 (Maxi Taxi)**

Web www.13CABS.com.au

Talking taxi communication tools

Resources to improve communication between taxi drivers and passengers are available from the Taxi Services Commission.

Multi Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP)

Provides subsidised taxi fares for Victorians with severe or permanent disability who also experience financial hardship.

Phone the **Taxi Services Commission** on **1800 638 802**

Web www.taxi.vic.gov.au

Disability Parking

A statewide Disabled Persons' Parking Scheme currently operates in Victoria. The current scheme provides for two permit categories with varying parking concessions based on the applicant's need for assistance. Application forms are available from your local council.

The permit must only be displayed when the vehicle is being used to transport the individual to whom the permit was issued. It cannot be used if the permit holder is not travelling in the vehicle. Permits must be clearly displayed so the permit number and expiry date are visible from the exterior of the vehicle. Parking is not permitted in restricted locations such as Clearways, No Stopping, No Parking Areas, Taxi Only Areas, Bus Zones, and Authorised Resident Areas. An individual is entitled to hold only one disability parking permit.

For more information phone **VicRoads** on **131 171** or visit www.vicroads.vic.gov.au

Australian Disability Parking Scheme

The Australian Disability Parking Scheme is an initiative developed by the Australian Government, in conjunction with the states and territories to improve disability parking schemes across Australia.

For more information visit www.disabilityparking.gov.au

Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme

Provides help for students who cannot go to an appropriate school because of geographical isolation, disability or special health need.

Phone **132 318**

Web **www.humanservices.gov.au**

Community transport

Some local governments and community service organisations operate community transport services that are available to children and young adults with a disability. Contact your local council or shire for more information. **See page 37.**

Public transport concessions & travel passes

Children under the age of four can travel free on public transport. Children aged 4 to 16 years are eligible for concession fares. Children aged 17 or older may qualify for concession fares through a Victorian Public Transport (VPT) Student Concession Card. Holders of a Health Care Card or Pension Concession Card qualify for concession fares without needing to purchase a VPT Student Concession Card.

Travel passes include:

- Access Travel Pass
- Scooter and Wheelchair Travel Pass
- Travel Trainer Pass
- Vision Impaired Travel Pass

For more information phone Public Transport Victoria on **1800 800 007** or **TTY 9619 2727**
Web **ptv.vic.gov.au**

A **Companion Card** provides free travel for the carer/companion of the cardholder on all public transport services. **See page 14.**

A **Carer Card** entitles cardholders to free travel on public transport on Sundays and travel vouchers for two free return off-peak trips in Victoria. **See page 30.**

Guide for choosing and using motorised mobility devices: mobility scooters and electric wheelchairs

Provides information about how to use an electric wheelchair or other motorised mobility device safely.

Phone **131 171**

Web **www.vicroads.vic.gov.au**

Vehicle registration

Concession card holders can pay registration fees six monthly. NIL registration fees and other exemptions may apply.

Phone **131 171**

Web **www.vicroads.vic.gov.au**

Travellers Aid Access Service (TAAS)

Provides assistance with personal care needs and travel related emergency relief to the travelling public.

Travellers Aid, Flinders Street Station

Includes a track mounted hoist.

Phone **9610 2030**

Travellers Aid, Southern Cross Station

Provides emergency relief.

Phone **9670 2072**

Web **www.travellersaid.org.au**

Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme (VPTAS)

Provides financial subsidies to patients living in rural and regional Victoria who need to travel long distances to access specialist medical services.

Phone **1300 737 073** or **5333 6040**

Web **health.vic.gov.au/ruralhealth/patient-transport-assistance**

Air travel

Assistance is available for boarding and special arrangements for people with a disability.

Contact the airline for more information.

More information

Vehicle Modification Subsidy Scheme, 16
Mobility Allowance, 13

Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (DEECD)

DEECD provides services to children and young people through government schools and regulation and funding of early childhood services and non-government schools.

DEECD Central Office

GPO Box 4367
MELBOURNE VIC 3001
Phone **9637 2000 (general inquiries)**
Web **www.education.vic.gov.au**

DEECD Information & Referral Service

Provides general information on Victorian education and schools, including term dates, special education events, school enrolment, school policy, health and wellbeing issues and financial support, as well as teacher qualifications and legislation.
Phone **1800 809 834 (freecall)**
Email **edline@edumail.vic.gov.au**
Web **www.education.vic.gov.au**

Parent Complaints

Refer to the DEECD website for information about how to raise an issue or make a complaint about child care, children's services or education.
Web **www.education.vic.gov.au**

Children's Services Regulations Enquiry Line

Provides information about licensing and monitoring requirements for children's services.
Email **licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au**
Phone **1300 307 415**
Web **www.education.vic.gov.au**

DEECD Regional Offices

Early Childhood Intervention Children's Services (ECIS)

Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) have a regional central point of entry. Central Intake gathers information and determines whether your child meets eligibility criteria for ECIS. In the first instance, referrals for ECIS must go to Central Intake who will work with you to identify concerns, to plan next steps and to make a referral to an ECIS agency.

North-Eastern ECIS Intake

Metropolitan

Local government areas: Boroondara, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges
Phone **1300 662 655** Fax 9265 2575
Email **nevr.ecis@edumail.vic.gov.au**

Rural

Local government areas: Alpine, Benalla, Greater Shepparton, Indigo, Mansfield, Mitchell, Moira, Murrindindi, Strathbogie, Towong, Wangaratta and Wodonga
Phone **1800 627 391** Fax 5762 5039
Email **nevr.ecis@edumail.vic.gov.au**

North-Western ECIS Intake

Metropolitan

Local government areas: Banyule, Darebin, Hume, Moreland, Nillumbik, Whittlesea and Yarra
Phone **9304 0775** Fax 9300 3872
Email **nwvr.ecis@edumail.vic.gov.au**

Rural

Local government areas: Bendigo, Buloke, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Gannawarra, Greater Macedon Ranges, Loddon, Mildura, Mt Alexander and Swan Hill
Phone **1300 363514** Fax 5442 5321
Email **nwvr.ecis@edumail.vic.gov.au**

South-Eastern ECIS Intake

Metropolitan

Local government areas: Bayside, Cardinia, Casey Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Mornington Port Phillip, Stonnington,
Phone **1300 720 151** Fax 8765 5666
Email **sevr.ecis@edumail.vic.gov.au**

Rural

Local Government Areas: Bass Coast, Baw Baw, East Gippsland, Latrobe, South Gippsland, Wellington
Phone **1800 336 010** Fax 5127 0451
Email **sevr.ecis@edumail.vic.gov.au**

South-Western ECIS Intake

Metropolitan

Local government areas: Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Melbourne, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham
Phone **9291 6500** Fax 9291 6565
Email **swvr.ecis@edumail.vic.gov.au**

Rural

Local government area: Ararat, Ballarat, Golden Plains, Hepburn, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Moorabool, Northern Grampians, Pyrenees, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack
Phone **9291 6500** Fax 9291 6565
Email **swvr.ecis@edumail.vic.gov.au**

Local government area: Greater Geelong, Surf Coast and Colac-Otway Shires, and the Borough of Queenscliff
Phone **9291 6500** Fax 9291 6565
Email **swvr.ecis@edumail.vic.gov.au**

DEECD Regional Offices Education

North-Eastern Victoria Region

(Includes the former Eastern Metropolitan and Hume regions.)
Email **nevr@edumail.vic.gov.au**
Web **www.education.vic.gov.au**

Benalla

Phone **5761 2100** Fax 5762 5039

Glen Waverley

Phone **9265 2400** Fax 9265 2444

North-Western Victoria Region

(Includes the former Northern Metropolitan and Loddon Mallee regions.)
Email **nwvr@edumail.vic.gov.au**
Web **www.education.vic.gov.au**

Bendigo

Phone **5440 3111** Fax 5442 5321

Coburg

Phone **9488 9488** Fax 9488 9400

South-Eastern Victoria Region

(Includes the former Southern Metropolitan and Gippsland regions.)
Email **sevr@edumail.vic.gov.au**
Web **www.education.vic.gov.au**

Dandenong

Phone **8765 5600** Fax 8765 5666

Moe

Phone **5127 0400** Fax 5126 1933

South-Western Victoria Region

(Includes the former Western Metropolitan, Barwon South West and Grampians regions.)
Email **swvr@edmail.vic.gov.au**
Web **www.education.vic.gov.au**

Ballarat

Phone **5337 8444** Fax 5333 2135

West Footscray

Phone **9291 6500** Fax 9291 6565

Geelong

Phone **5225 1000** Fax 5225 1099

Department of Human Services (DHS)

The Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) provides services for people with a disability and their families to participate in community life.

Disability Intake & Response

For statewide disability information and support phone **1800 783 783** or **TTY 13 36 77** and ask for **1300 650 172**.

If you need an interpreter, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on **13 14 50** and ask to be connected to the Intake and Response Service Regional Office in your area.

DHS Head Office

Level 8, 50 Lonsdale Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000
Phone **1300 650 172** or **9096 0000 (outside TTY 13 36 77)** and ask for **1300 650 172**
Web www.dhs.vic.gov.au

Disability email enquiries

Eastern

east.disability@dhs.vic.gov.au

Western

west.informationandsupport@dhs.vic.gov.au

Southern

south.disability@dhs.vic.gov.au

Northern

north.intake@dhs.vic.gov.au

Other contacts

Concessions Help Line

Phone **1800 658 521**

Carer Card Hotline

Phone **1800 901 958**

Victorian Emergency Recovery Information Line

Phone **1300 769 926**

For more information about the Department of Human Services (DHS) visit www.dhs.vic.gov.au. To find out which region you live in see [page 2](#).

Migrant Resource Centres

Migrant Resource Centres assist people to settle in Australia by providing information and support to people of all ages from ethnic communities.

Northern Region

Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre
Phone **9496 0200** (Preston)
Phone **9301 7400** (Broadmeadows)
Phone **9300 8600** (Sunshine)
Web **www.spectrumvic.org.au**

Eastern Region

Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne)
Phone **9285 4888 (Box Hill)**
Phone **9020 2969 (Croydon)**
Web **www.miceastmelb.com.au**

Southern Region

Southern Migrant and Refugee Centre
Phone **9767 1900** (Dandenong)
Phone **8574 4600** (Oakleigh)
Phone **9705 6966** (Narre Warren)
Web **www.smrc.org.au**

Western Region

Migrant Resource Centre North West Region
Phone **9367 6044** (St Albans & Hobsons Bay)
Phone **9351 1278** (Hume)
Web **www.mrcnorthwest.org.au**

Phoenix Migrant Resource Centre Western Region
Phone **9391 3355**
Web **www.wmrc.org.au**

Barwon South Western Region

Diversitat
Phone **5221 6044**
Web **www.diversitat.org.au**

Gippsland Region

Gippsland Multicultural Services
Phone **5133 7072**
Web **www.gmsinfo.com.au**

Statewide

New Hope Foundation
Phone **9510 5877** (Pahran)
Web **www.newhope.asn.au**

Ethnic Council of Shepparton & District
Phone **5831 2395**
Web **www.ethniccouncilshepparton.com.au**

For more information about Migrant Resource Centres visit the Victorian Multicultural Commission website **www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/resources/community-directory**

Regional Parent Support Co-ordinators

Contact the Regional Parent Support Co-ordinator in your region for information about support in your local area.

Metropolitan Regions

North Eastern Metropolitan Region

Co-ordinator
Eastern Region Parent Support Network
Phone **9874 6205**
Email psn-emr@bigpond.net.au
www.psn-emr.com.au

North Western Metropolitan Region

Thea Calzoni
Northern Region Parent Support Program
Phone **9385 3235**
Email tcalzoni@mcm.org.au
www.melbournecitymission.org.au

South Western Metropolitan Region

Pauline Parsons
Western Region Parent to Parent
Phone **9680 8444**
Email regionalparentingservice@mackillop.org.au
www.mackillop.org.au

South Eastern Metropolitan Region

Kerri Rolfe
Parent to Parent Southern Region
Phone **8552 2222**
Email krolfe@moira.org.au
www.moira.org.au

Rural Regions

South Western Non- Metropolitan Region

Ballarat
Melissa Delaland-Desfosses, Pinarc Disability Support
Phone **5329 1361**
Email mdelaland-desfosses@pinarc.org.au
www.pinarc.org.au

Geelong/Colac

Carolyn McDiarmid, Gateways
Phone **5221 2984**
Email Carolyn.mcdiarmid@gateways.com.au
www.gateways.com.au

Horsham

Anne Page, Wimmera Uniting Care
Phone **5362 4042**
Email annep@wuc.org.au
www.wimmera.unitingcare.org.au

Warrnambool

Sandy Joyce, Mpower
Phone **5561 8111**
Email sjoyce@mpower.org.au
www.mpower.org.au

North Western Non- Metropolitan Region

Bendigo
Jackie Dacey, SCAFFALD-Supporting children and families for all levels of disability
Phone **1800 224 799** or **0434 298 834**
Email jackie@riac.org.au
www.riac.org.au

North Eastern Non- Metropolitan Region

Benalla
Roslyn Archer, Benalla Support Group for Children with Special Needs
Phone **5762 7057**
Email bsgroup@telcoplus.com.au
www.benalla.vic.gov.au

Mansfield

Liz Klein, Mansfield Support Group for Children with Special Needs
Phone **0428 410 883**
Email snmansfield2010@gmail.com
www.mansfield.vic.au

Seymour, Shepparton & Yarrawonga

Nicole O'Brien, Goulburn Valley Support Group for Children with Special Needs Inc
Phone **5831 7157**
Email information@gvsgcsn.com.au
www.ourcommunity.com.au/directories/children

Wodonga

Sue Pringle, Aspire Support Services
Phone **02 6058 4000**
Email sue.pringle@aspiress.com.au
www.aspiress.com.au

South Eastern Non- Metropolitan Region

Gippsland
Yvonne Waite, Parent to Parent Gippsland
Phone **1800 010 453** or **5135 3131**
Email yvonne.waite@noahsarkinc.org.au
www.noahsarkinc.org.au

Index

A

- Accessibility, 14
- Access for All Abilities Program, 41
- Access Travel Pass, 47
- Administration and guardianship, 36
- Advocacy, 40
- Aids and equipment, 15
- Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme, 47
- Authorising a nominee, 13
- Autism Advisors, 17
- Autism spectrum disorders (ASD), 17

B

- Behaviour, 19

C

- Carer Allowance (Adult), 30
- Carer Allowance (Child), 29
- Carer Payment (Adult), 30
- Carer Payment (Child), 29
- Case management, 11
- Centrelink, 29
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), 18
- Child care, 20
- Choosing a school, 27
- Communication & speech, 21
- Community Health Centres, 6
- Companion Card, 14
- Concessions, 30
- Continence assistance, 15
- Continence Aids Payments Scheme, 16

- Continence Support Service, 16

- Conveyance Allowance, 46
- Counselling & support, 22

D

- Deafaccess Program, 37
- Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (DEECD), 48
- Department of Human Services (DHS), 50
- Diagnosis and assessment, 9
- Disability Act 2006, 35
- Disability Action Plan, 37
- Disability Education Standards 2005, 39
- Disability Intake and Response Service, 11
- Disability Parking, 46
- Disability Services, 11
- Disability Services Commissioner, 38
- Disability-specific groups, 24
- Disability Support Pension, 13
- Disability Support Register, 43

E

- Early childhood services, 9
- Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS), 10
- ECIS Flexible Support Packages, 10
- Education, 26
- Eligibility, 4
- Equipment Distribution Centre, RCH, 16
- Equipment Recycling Network Inc (ERNI), 16

- Ex Carer Allowance (child) Health Care Card, 13

- Exploring the Possibilities booklet, 12

F

- Family day care, 20
- Family Resource & Respite Centre, RCH, 31
- Flexible Support Packages, 43
- Financial assistance, 29
- Futures for Young Adults, 12

G

- GoKids Mobility Advisory Service, 16
- Government services, 4
- Guardianship, 36
- Green PC, 16

H

- Health & medical, 31
- Helping Children with Autism package, 17
- Home and Community Care (HACC) Program, 42
- Housing & accommodation, 32

I

- Inclusion Support Subsidy, 20
- Inclusive Classroom School Resource, 26
- Individual advocacy, 40
- Individual Support Packages, 43
- Information & advocacy, 33
- In-home care, 20
- In-home respite, 42

- K**
- Key contacts, 6
 - Kindergarten Inclusion Tip Sheets, 10
- L**
- Legal services, 35
 - Local government, 37
 - Local government areas, 2
- M**
- Making a complaint, 38
 - Maternal and Child Health Services, 9
 - Mental Health Care Plan, 18
 - MetroAccess Program, 37
 - Migrant Resource Centres, 51
 - Mobility Allowance, 13
 - Multi-purpose Taxi Program, 46
 - MyTime groups, 10
- N**
- National Carer Counselling Program, 22
 - National Continence Helpline, 16
 - National Disability Co-ordination Program, 12
 - National Public Toilet Map, 16
- O**
- Out of home respite, 42
 - Outside school hours care, 20
- P**
- Parent advocacy, 40
 - Parent feedback, 55
 - Pensioner Education Supplement, 13
 - PlayConnect playgroups, 10
 - Playgroup Victoria, 10
 - Positive Education Planning booklet, 26
 - Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD), 28
 - Proof of Age card, 13
- R**
- Raising Children Network website, 6
 - Recreation, 41
 - Referral to a service, 4
 - Regional Parent Support Co-ordinators, 52
 - Regional Quick Guides, 1
 - Registered Disability Service Providers, 11
 - Respite care, 42
 - RuralAccess Program, 37
- S**
- Self-directed planning & support, 43
 - Sexuality and relationships, 13
 - Siblings, 44
 - Solve Disability Solutions, 16
 - Speech pathology, 21
 - Specialist services, 4
 - Statewide Equipment Program (SWEP), 15
 - Student Support Services, 18
 - Systemic advocacy, 40
- T**
- Taxis, 46
 - Therapy, 45
 - The Senior Practitioner, 19
 - Tips for being an effective advocate, 40
 - Transition
 - planning, 5
 - to adult life, 13
 - to school, 26
 - Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) National, 14
 - Transport, 46
 - Travellers Aid Access Service (TAAS), 47
 - Turning 16 and Centrelink, 13
- V**
- VALID, 34
 - Variety - the Children's Charity, 16
 - Very Special Kids, 23, 31, 44
 - Vehicle Modification Subsidy Scheme, 16
 - Victorian Administrative Appeals Tribunal (VCAT), 36
 - Victorian Autism State Plan, 17
 - Victorian Continence Resource Centre, 16
 - Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission Victoria, 35
 - Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme (VPTAS), 47
 - Victorian State Disability Plan 2013–2016, 14
 - Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service, 36
- W**
- Where to start, 4
- Y**
- Yooralla Equipment Library, 16
 - Yooralla Independent Living Centre, 16
 - Young adults, 12
 - Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS), 13

Parent feedback

Your feedback will help us provide information that is relevant and of interest to families of children with a disability. After completing the survey please tear off this page and post to **Association for Children with a Disability, Reply Paid 84584, Hawthorn VIC 3122**. You can also email feedback to **mail@acd.org.au** or fax it to **03 9818 2300**.

Did the **Through the Maze** booklet provide the information you were looking for? **Yes** **No**

What other information would you like to see included?

Was the information easy to find? **Yes** **No**

Could the layout or design be improved to make it easier to read? **Yes** **No**

If yes, how?

Is the size of this booklet right for this type of information? **Yes** **No**

How did you receive this booklet?

Do you use the Internet to find information? **Yes** **No**

Are you a member of the Association for Children with a Disability? **Yes** **No**

Association for Children with a Disability

Membership

If you're not already a member of ACD, it's easy to join!

Membership is FREE for families for the first 12 months.

Benefits of membership include our member magazine, NoticeBoard, which includes family stories, news and information about services and changes to government policy.

We encourage families to join our Association as well as other disability self-help groups. Our aim is to work together on issues that reach across all disabilities.

Service providers, organisations, interested persons and other community supporters are also encouraged to join our Association.

In addition to membership, we also welcome donations. All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

For more information contact the ACD office on 03 9818 2000 or 1800 654 013 (rural callers), by email mail@acd.org.au or visit www.acd.org.au or our Facebook page www.facebook.com/acdvic





 Association for
Children with a Disability
www.acd.org.au