

Professional development for early childhood educators



Learning how to support children with additional needs or disability in early childhood settings helps to ensure that all children in your care are supported and included.

There are many resources and training opportunities available for early childhood educators in Victoria.

Disability Standards for Education

The Disability Standards for Education set out the rights of students with disability, including:

- Not discriminating against students with disability
- The reasonable adjustments that Australian law requires education providers to make for students with disability
- How to ensure reasonable adjustments are fair to individual students with disability
- Working together with the student, their family and/or other associates

Disability Standards for Education

<https://www.nccd.edu.au/disability-standards-education>

There are e-learning courses on the Disability Standards for Education across all levels of education.

Professional learning

<https://www.nccd.edu.au/resources-and-tools/professional-learning/format/e-learning-5>

Accurate and current information on disabilities and medical conditions

It's important for early childhood educators to maintain up-to-date information about different disabilities and medical conditions to ensure all students are supported appropriately. There are several resources available to help with this.

The Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) fact sheets

RCH Melbourne has developed Kids Health Info fact sheets to increase understanding of a child's medical condition and/or treatment. All medical conditions and disabilities are listed alphabetically on the website linking to the relevant fact sheets.

Kids Health Information fact sheets

https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/

Disability-specific learning opportunities

AllPlay Learn

AllPlay Learn provides practical online information and courses to help create inclusive education environments for children with disability. The educators' section on the AllPlay Learn website includes information about different disabilities, strategies to help children with developmental challenges, and resources for early childhood education and care settings. AllPlay Learn was developed by Deakin University in partnership with the Victorian Department of Education (DOE).

AllPlay Learn - early educators

<https://allplaylearn.org.au/early/educator/>

Amaze

Amaze offers a two-hour interactive workshop for professionals working in an early child care setting on how to support young autistic children. Workshops can be tailored to your needs, with consultative services, links and assistance upon course completion.

Amaze - training

<https://www.amaze.org.au/training/>

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

OnLineTraining works with school sectors across Australia to create courses that support children and young people with special educational needs. They offer a range of free e-learning courses, including one on ADHD.

E-learning course - ADHD

<https://aus.oltinternational.net/understanding-attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder>

Autism Awareness Australia

'Navigating Autism: The Early Years' empowers early childhood educators to confidently and effectively support autistic children and their parents and carers. Designed with the help of parents, professionals and other educators, it contains free, evidence-based information and resources that can be accessed anytime, anywhere.

Navigating Autism

<https://navigating-autism.teachable.com/p/navigating-autism-the-early-years>

Calmer classrooms - A guide to working with traumatised children

This booklet assists kindergarten, primary and secondary teachers, and other school staff in understanding and working with children and young people affected by trauma, published by the Child Safety Commissioner.

Calmer classrooms

https://earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/files/calmer_classrooms.pdf

Centre for Community Child Health - Royal Children's Hospital

The Centre for Community Child Health supports the health and wellbeing of children aged 0 to 8. They offer a range of online professional development and training courses, including one on how to build and sustain helpful relationships with parents.

Centre for Community Child Health training

<https://www.rch.org.au/ccch/training-dev/>

Cerebral Palsy Education Centre (CPEC)

CPEC offers a variety of professional learning modules and workshops for educators working with students with cerebral palsy, including courses specifically designed for kindergarten and day care.

CPEC Workshops & Training

<https://cpec.org.au/services/onsite-training/>

Early Childhood Australia

Early Childhood Australia is the peak early childhood advocacy organisation advocating for quality outcomes in early childhood settings. They have a well-established Learning Hub offering a variety of courses including how to support children with Autism and children with behaviour support needs.

Early Childhood Australia Learning Hub

<https://learninghub.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/>

Early Years Connect

The Queensland Early Years Connect website offers online modules, webinar recordings and information sheets to help early childhood educators support children with complex additional needs to participate fully in early childhood education.

Early Years Connect online modules

<https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/sector-news-and-resources/inclusion-resources/early-years-connect>

Emerging Minds

Emerging Minds works to support the mental health and wellbeing of infants, children adolescents and their families. They offer free online courses and resources that cover child development, child mental health and disability, trauma, loss and grief.

Emerging Minds

<https://learning.emergingminds.com.au/>

Victorian Department of Education

The Victorian Department of Education offers a free course for early years professionals called Early Childhood Inclusion for Children with Disability available through their eLearning Portal.

Early Childhood Inclusion for Children with Disability eLearning Portal

<https://earlychildhoodinclusion.tech-savvy.com.au/>

Communication resources and equipment

Specialist Equipment Library

Yooralla's Specialist Equipment Library operates as part of the Inclusion Support Program. The library loans a variety of equipment not usually found in child care settings to help enable greater inclusion. Examples include portable ramps, standing frames, hoists, slings, change tables, specialised furniture, communication cards and inclusion toys.

Special Equipment Library

<https://www.yooralla.com.au/specialist-equipment-library/>

Vision Australia

Families and educators can join the Vision Australia Felix Children's Library to borrow special braille and tactile storybook kits.

Felix Children's Library

<https://www.visionaustralia.org/services/library/felix-childrens-library>

Yellow Ladybugs

Yellow ladybugs has video resources on supporting autistic girls in early childhood education.

Yellow ladybugs

<https://yellowladybugs.com.au>

Additional support

Inclusion Support Program

The Inclusion Support Program is a nationally funded program to identify and address barriers to inclusion in child care settings. Information about eligibility and supports are available in the Inclusion Support Guidelines.

Inclusion Support Portal

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood/inclusion-support-program/inclusion-support-portal>

Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS)

KIS is funded by the Victorian Department of Education specifically for kindergartens. Available supports include specialist training and consultancy, minor building modifications and additional staff (usually kindergarten assistants).

There are two types of programs:

- Disability - for children with disability or developmental delay and high support needs), and
- Complex medical needs - for children with complex medical needs and high levels of health care support but who do not have disability)

Kindergarten inclusion for children with disabilities

<https://www.vic.gov.au/kindergarten-inclusion-children-disabilities>

School Readiness Funding Menu

The School Readiness Funding Menu by the Victorian Department of Education includes detailed information about how to apply for School Readiness Funding. It covers these priority areas of communication (language development), wellbeing (social and emotional), access and inclusion.

School Readiness Funding menu

<https://www.vic.gov.au/school-readiness-funding-menu>

Related topics

Getting started at child care and kindergarten

<https://www.acd.org.au/getting-started-at-child-care-and-kinder/>

Accessing NDIS support for children aged 0 to 8

<https://www.acd.org.au/accessing-ndis-support-for-children-aged-0-to-8/>