

Victorian Early Childhood Intervention Standards (2016) Fact Sheet

Victorian Early Childhood Intervention Standards

The Department of Education and Training (the Department) has updated the Specialist Children's Services Program Standards (1998), renaming them the Victorian Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) Standards (2016).

Background

In 1998 the Specialist Children's Services Standards were developed to guide the delivery of Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) in Victoria.

Since that time there have been significant advances in research underpinning the learning and development of all children and the best practices to support this.

Additionally the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) will mean changes to the way children and families access early intervention supports.

What are the Victorian ECI Standards?

The Victorian ECI Standards (the Standards) retain the key features and intent of the original standards and have been updated to reflect the contemporary research, initiatives and early childhood frameworks that have been implemented both in the early childhood and early childhood intervention fields since the 1998 Standards were developed.

The five ECI Standards are:

- Family Centred Practice
- Access and Engagement
- Outcomes for Children and Families
- Inclusion and Participation
- Organisational Performance

Within each standard, criteria describe the key components to be addressed to meet the standard. Against each criterion, indicators assist organisations to understand how they can measure their compliance with the standards and plan quality improvements. Examples of evidence will also be developed.

The Standards reflect the early intervention outcomes for young children with disabilities or developmental delays and their families:

- Optimising the child's learning, development and ability to participate in family, early childhood education and care settings and broader community life
- Assisting parents and families to have the knowledge, skills and support to respond to the needs of their child

They are underpinned by the key principle of family centred practice, which is recognised as the foundation of effective early childhood intervention supports nationally and internationally.

The Standards support funded early childhood intervention providers to understand the Victorian Government's expectations in regard to the quality of service delivery for young children with disability or developmental delay and their families.



To which organisations do the Standards apply?

The Standards apply in their entirety to the Department's internal Specialist Children's Services teams and funded external ECIS providers.

Why were the Standards updated?

This work was undertaken to:

- Provide a contemporary focus to the Standards guiding Victorian ECIS
- Provide clarity regarding the Victorian Government's quality expectations for all ECIS providers
- Reflect a continuous quality improvement approach
- Support families of children with disability or developmental delay to understand features of high quality early childhood intervention
- Reflect Early Childhood Intervention Australia's *Best Practice in Early Intervention Guidelines*
- Reflect the findings of the *ECIS Literature Review* commissioned by the Department in 2010
- Acknowledge the significant changes to both Commonwealth and State children's services in recent years through the introduction of both the *National Quality Framework (NQF)* and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)* and the subsequent understanding of how all children learn and develop
- Provide a robust quality and safeguarding foundation to support Victoria's transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- Provide further information to support boards of management, chief executive officers and service managers in relation to the provision of high quality service delivery to young children with disability or developmental delay and their families

What does it mean for my organisation?

Organisations funded by the Department to deliver ECIS in Victoria will continue to be monitored within the current monitoring framework:

- Service agreement terms and conditions
- Monitoring at the regional level
- Delivery of performance measures identified in the *Early Childhood Programs and Services Guide*

Additionally the ECI Standards now replace the Specialist Children's Services Standards (1998).

ECI Standards and the NDIS

Over the 2016-2019 period, ECI supports in Victoria will transition to the NDIS. Victorian and Commonwealth governments have agreed that during the three year transition to the scheme Victoria will maintain responsibility for quality and safeguarding for the provision of early childhood intervention. The ECI Standards will underpin the processes.

Information on the NDIS nationally consistent approach to quality and safeguarding currently under development which will operate under the full scheme is available via the following link:

<http://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/safeguards>

What is the Victorian ECIS Guide?

In addition to the ECI Standards, the Department has developed a Victorian ECIS Guide. The Guide builds on the information provided to organisations in the *Early Childhood Programs and Services Guide, December 2015*.

The Guide has been developed to:

- Provide clarity regarding the delivery of ECIS
- Support prospective new providers of early intervention supports for early childhood under the NDIS to understand the model of ECIS in Victoria

The Guide can be found at the following link:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/news/Pages/ecispublications.aspx>