

## Kindergarten Support Recommendations for Families

Please refer to the RCH Education Institute website <https://www.rch.org.au/education/> for more detailed information on kindergarten supports and recommendations.

### Staying connected to kindergarten and learning

#### Teach your teachers

Share information that you have been given about your child's health condition with teachers and staff at kindergarten.

#### Meetings

Arrange regular meetings at kindergarten with your child's teacher or director. Kindergartens will be better able to plan ahead and offer support when they are kept informed and updated throughout your child's illness and treatment.

#### Key Contacts

Establish key contacts at kindergarten to engage with. Contacts at kindergarten may include: Director, Teacher/Facilitator, Aide/Education Support.

There are also many contacts and resources within the Department of Education & Training (DET) e.g. Preschool Field Officers, Funding Coordinators, Parent Complaints Resolution – Community Liaison Officer and Parentline. Discuss these DET supports with your child's kindergarten.

#### Learning at home

Speak to your child's kindergarten for learning supports and resources if your child has an extended absence from kindergarten.

### Supports available at kindergarten

Kindergarten can help you access extra support if your child has a health condition.

#### Inclusive Practice

Inclusive kindergarten programs make sure that all children can participate, learn, and develop in an environment that supports their individual strengths and interests. There are a wide variety of resources available to kindergartens to support in the planning of an inclusive program. These may include Early Childhood Teachers, Early Childhood Intervention Professionals, local government community services and Preschool Field Officers.

#### Medical Management Plan

If your child has a diagnosed medical condition, the kindergarten or early learning service will ask you to provide a Medical Management Plan. You should ask your medical team or GP to help develop this plan and it should include details such as the diagnosis, symptoms, medications and how to respond if your child becomes unwell.

#### Risk minimisation plan and communications plan

Kindergartens and early learning centres must develop a risk minimisation plan to ensure that all staff are familiar with your child and their medical condition. They will also use the Medical Management Plan to assess and minimise any risks related to your child's condition.

### Students with disabilities and additional learning needs

Your child has the right to take part in all education courses or programs on the same basis as their peers. Your child may need some reasonable adjustments, funding or extra supports to make sure they can take part.

#### Reasonable Adjustments

To make sure your child has the same learning opportunities as children without disability, an education provider must make reasonable adjustments. [Reasonable adjustments](#) may include changes to the way your child is supported in their learning, changes to the kindergarten environment and providing additional supports.

#### Program Support Groups

A [program support group](#) (PSG) gives you the opportunity to work with your child's kindergarten to make decisions about their education and check their progress. PSG's ensure that those with the most knowledge of, and responsibilities for the student, work together to establish shared goals (Individual Learning Plan), plan reasonable adjustments and monitor progress.

#### Funding - Kindergarten Inclusion Support Program

The Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) program is designed to equip kindergartens and early childhood educators with the resources they need to provide a program that is inclusive of all children, including those with complex medical needs or disability.

## Returning to kindergarten

### Return to kindergarten plan

The plan can outline agreed expectations about attendance and learning, any additional support the student requires, and what the kindergarten can do to support the student. When developing the return to kindergarten plan consider modifications and reasonable adjustments such as changes to the curriculum, timetable or school buildings.

### Gradual return

Full time attendance may be hard to cope with after an illness or extended absence. Negotiate a timetable that works for your child and their kindergarten and ensure everyone has a copy. Some suggestions could include:

- Reduced hours in the first few weeks;
- Monitor your child's fatigue (physical and cognitive) and discuss coping strategies with kindergarten staff;
- Ensure your child's modified timetable allows time for socialising as well as classes; and
- Investigate transport options.

### Student Health Support Plans

Before returning to kindergarten, provide teaching and wellbeing staff with recent information about your child's health condition and medications. Ensure that emergency contact details are up to date. Work with your education setting and medical team to complete a student health support plan. [Health support planning forms](#) can be accessed via the Department of Education and Training website or directly from wellbeing staff at your child's kindergarten.

### Ongoing appointments

Tell your child's teachers and/or key contacts about upcoming appointments and treatments that may continue to cause interruptions after they return to kindergarten.

### Fitting in

Many children and young people face fears and worries about returning to their usual learning environment after an illness or extended absence. It is important for teaching staff and parents to be aware of these anxieties and challenges and check in regularly with the student to see how they are coping, as well as provide strategies and supports that make the transition less overwhelming.

## Other contacts and links

### [Department of Education and Training Victoria](#)

Information, advice and policies for families enrolled in government schools and kindergartens.

### [Independent Schools Council Australia \(ISCA\) - Students with Disability](#)

Information about funding and support in private and independent education settings.

### [NDIS Early Childhood Early Intervention](#)

Information about how the Early Childhood Early Intervention works as part of NDIS.

### [Association for Children with a Disability \(ACD\) Australia](#)

Information, support and resources for parents and carers of children with a disability.

### [RCH Kids Health Info](#)

Fact sheets to share with your school or kindergarten.

### [Parentline](#)

A phone service for parents and carers of children from birth to 18 years old provided by the Department of Education and Training.