

My child has a physical disability

Information for Queensland families of young children



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A Parent Connect resource

Message from the Minister



Finding out your child has a physical disability raises many questions, especially about what information, supports and services are at hand for you and your family.

A physical disability may be the result of a condition that a child is born with, or due to an injury, and every child will require their own level of support.

Accessing specialist services during these early years not only provides important support for families, but can enable children to achieve crucial developmental milestones.

My child has a physical disability is a guide for families about how they can support their child's inclusion in family and community life.

It includes practical information about your child's development and early intervention services and supports that are available.

The Queensland Government is focused on revitalising frontline services for families of young children. Through initiatives such as Parent Connect, and by increasing the number of speech and language pathologists for all children with a disability in Queensland schools, we are delivering direct assistance to families.

As we deliver these new priorities for Queensland, I look forward to enabling a better future for Queensland families of children with a physical disability.

Montrose Access and the Sunshine Coast Children's Therapy Centre made important contributions during the development of this guide. I would like to thank them for their support and their ongoing commitment to Queensland children with a physical disability and their families.

The Honourable Tracy Davis MP
Minister for Communities, Child Safety
and Disability Services

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1. About physical disability

This guide is intended to answer some of the questions that you may have if you have concerns your child has a physical disability or your child has recently been diagnosed with a physical disability.

A physical disability or impairment can be described as a condition that prevents normal body movement or limits a person's physical functioning, control, mobility, dexterity or stamina.

A person may be born with a physical disability or acquire it later in life through accident, injury or illness.

Physical disabilities have many different causes including:

- inherited or genetic disorders such as muscular dystrophy
- conditions present at birth such as spina bifida
- serious illness affecting the brain, nerves or muscles such as meningitis
- accidents leading to spinal cord injury
- accidents leading to brain injury.

The impact of physical disability may be influenced by the cause of disability or the severity of a condition or injury causing disability, however, it will also be influenced by the child's environment, including activities they are involved in and participation in their day to day life.

What are the early signs of physical disability?

Symptoms will vary for different types of physical disability and also for each child.

Some parents may know before their child is born that he or she has a physical disability. For some children,

the disability may come later, as a result of an accident.

For others, the disability only becomes apparent over time, for example, when a child experiences difficulties or does not reach expected developmental milestones.

Are there different types of physical disability?

There are many different kinds of physical disability.

Some of the most prevalent types of physical disability are detailed in our other information resources. These include:

- cerebral palsy
- acquired brain injury
- sensory impairments
- spinal cord injury.

Below are two examples of conditions that cause physical disability.

Muscular dystrophy is a genetic neuromuscular condition where over time the body's muscle fibres gradually weaken. Children can have different kinds of muscular dystrophy — Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy is the most common type.

Muscular Dystrophy weakens muscles over time, so children who have the disease can gradually lose the ability to do things they used to be able to do: such as walking or sitting up unaided. Someone with this condition might start having muscle problems as a baby or their symptoms might not be noticed until much later. Some people do not develop symptoms until they are adults.

Information about the many types of genetic neuromuscular conditions can

be found at the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

Spina bifida is a birth defect which occurs when the bones of the spine do not form properly around part of the baby's spinal cord. The defect occurs in utero very early in pregnancy and occurs in two forms:

- spina bifida occulta (the mildest form)
- spina bifida manifesta (Meningocele or Myelomeningocele).

In the mild form of spina bifida, which is more common, there may be no signs or symptoms. It usually does not cause problems or need treatment.

The more severe forms of spina bifida are less common. There are two types — meningocele causes fluid from the spine to push against the skin and in many cases there are no other symptoms. Myelomeningocele causes the nerves in the spine to be damaged resulting in problems with walking, bladder or bowel control and coordination.

Multiple disabilities

Multiple disabilities occur when children with physical disability have other disabilities, such as intellectual, visual or hearing impairments. They may have communication difficulties or medical conditions such as epilepsy.

The first sign of muscular dystrophy may be a swaying gait or difficulty in climbing stairs.

How common is physical disability?

While the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare statistics indicate one in five Australians has a disability, just how many have a physical disability is not known as there is no common definition.

More information

It is typical for a child to sit without support at nine months and to stand with help by 12 months.

Find out more

Montrose Access

3379 9200

www.montroseaccess.org.au

Sunshine Coast Children's Therapy Centre

5441 7199

www.scctc.org.au

Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Queensland

3844 4600

www.spinabifida.org

Muscular Dystrophy Queensland

1800 676 364

www.mdqld.org.au

Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland

1800 275 753

www.cplqld.org.au

2. Diagnosis

The early years are critical for your child's development. It is the time when your child's brain is still developing and is especially responsive to supportive environments and therapies.

Having your child assessed and diagnosed as having a physical disability will enable access to necessary early intervention services which aim to improve your child's physical and social abilities and provide information and support for you as parents, about caring for your child.

It is important to remember children develop at different rates. Some children develop more slowly than others but catch up with time. However, if you are concerned your child is not achieving developmental milestones such as rolling, sitting, crawling, walking and talking see advice from a GP or specialist. It is better to have your concerns checked than to wait and see.

The plasticity of a young child's nervous system means there is greater capacity to recover from an injury and children's motor abilities can develop differently and at different rates. There may be situations where your child's paediatrician may want to defer or hold off on making a diagnosis of physical disability until your child is a bit older.

Tips for parents

Keep a diary or video of any concerns you have about your child's development. This information will help you in your consultation with your GP or paediatrician.

Who provides a diagnosis of physical disability in Queensland?

In Queensland, a paediatrician can diagnose physical disability in young children, although input to diagnosis may be sought from physiotherapists and occupational therapists, and speech and language pathologists.

A diagnosis is based on information provided about a child's development and observing their behaviour. There may also be some tests for particular kinds of physical disability. A GP can provide a referral to a paediatrician.

A paediatrician can be seen privately or through the public health system. There will usually be costs for private paediatricians, however, waiting times for an appointment may be shorter. The consultation will be at no cost if it is with a paediatrician in the public health system.

Families living in rural and remote areas can access a visiting Queensland Health paediatrician. Talk to your GP about getting a referral.

After diagnosis

It is normal for you to feel overwhelmed when you first learn about your child's diagnosis.

You may also feel uncertainty about your child's future and it is important to recognise that you may need extra support.

You may get this support from your family and friends, but it is also good to talk to your GP and find out about local parent support groups and the availability of professional support such as a counsellor or social worker.

When your child receives a diagnosis your paediatrician will discuss the types of supports and services that will optimise your child's development and a treatment plan may be developed.

Remember that the plan is about your child so you and your family should be involved in the development process.

You will also receive information on the services and supports available in your local community.

Parent Connect

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services' Parent Connect initiative supports parents of newborns and children newly diagnosed with disability. It is an early response service providing information and linking families to family support networks, community services and funding to access specialist services.

Carers Queensland

Carers Queensland provides carers with information, education, training, advocacy, counselling and other support services that may assist them in their caring role. The organisation also raises awareness about the valuable role and contributions of carers.

Child health services in the community

Staffed by nurses and allied health professionals, free child health services are available at community clinics. Home visiting may also be provided. Child health checks are recommended at one, two, four, six and 12 months of age. Information is available on child health, parenting, child development, immunisation and nutrition. Families can be linked to local services and parent groups. For further information refer to your baby's Red Book.

Financial support

If you live in a rural or remote area and need to travel to attend specialist medical appointments, you may be eligible for the Queensland Patient Transport Assistance Scheme. Ask your GP for further information.

Should your child's support needs mean that you are unable to enter paid employment, you may be eligible for Carer Payment. Centrelink can provide you with information regarding your eligibility as well as information on supplementary payments such as Carer Allowance or Child Disability Assistance Payment.

Find out more

Child Health Services in the Community

13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)

www.health.qld.gov.au

Carers Queensland

3900 8100

1800 242 636 (Advisory Service)

Queensland Patient Transport Assistance Scheme

www.health.qld.gov.au

Centrelink

132 468

www.centrelink.gov.au

Disability Online — family friendly resources

www.qld.gov.au

Disability Information Services

13 QGOV

www.communities.qld.gov.au

Find out more

Parent Connect is provided by the following organisations:

Cairns – The Benevolent Society
4045 0003
www.benevolent.org.au/

Townsville – The Cootharinga Society of North Queensland
4759 2008
www.cootharinga.org.au/

Rockhampton – The Cootharinga Society of North Queensland in partnership with The Umbrella Network
4928 6550
www.theumbrellanetwork.org/

Sunshine Coast – Sunshine Coast Children's Therapy Centre
5441 4937
www.scctc.org.au/

Brisbane North – Mission Australia
3828 9311

Brisbane South – Mission Australia
3713 2602

Ipswich – Mission Australia
3713 2602
www.missionaustralia.com.au/

Gold Coast – The Benevolent Society
5644 9400
www.benevolent.org.au/

3. Early intervention services

Early intervention services are important for children with a physical disability to help them develop skills in play, communication, movement, social relationships and functional behaviours.

Early intervention services can also help develop your child's independence and ability to adapt to their environment, the skills they need to participate in child care and kindergarten, and their readiness for school.

A range of supports for families of children with disability, including children with a physical disability, from birth to school entry, can be provided. These services include:

- information and planning
- advice on your child's developmental needs
- multidisciplinary therapy to support the child's development and help reach developmental milestones
- referrals to other specialist services and mainstream services
- coordination of services for children with complex needs
- support with transitioning to a kindergarten program and school
- counselling and linking families with other families and support groups.

How will my child benefit from early intervention?

Early intervention is most effective and provides the best possible outcomes for your child when provided as early as possible after diagnosis.

Early childhood intervention services should be tailored to the individual needs of your child and family.

It is important for you as a parent to have a good rapport with your child's service providers and feel able to ask lots of questions about your child's programs and progress.

Early childhood intervention services can assist you and your family to develop knowledge and skills and provide support to meet the needs of your child, optimise your child's development and increase their ability to participate in family and community life.

Professionals should spend time with you working on goals that can be incorporated into your family routines and play activities.

Tips for parents

Encouraging your child's development through play and helping your child communicate and develop social skills is an important way you, as parents, can support your child at home.

What types of early intervention are available for children with a physical disability?

The Queensland Government and the Australian Government fund early intervention services for children with a physical disability in Queensland. This section details the main services available.

Early Intervention for Children with a Physical Disability initiative

Children with a physical disability aged up to eight years of age can access early intervention services through this initiative of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services.

Services include therapy support, information for families about their child's disability, referrals to other services, assistance to access aids and equipment, and parenting support. Families can access the initiative directly through the Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland, Montrose Access and Sunshine Coast Therapy Services.

Services respond to the individual needs of your family and will support your child's participation in family and community life.

Early intervention services

The Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services provides early intervention services to children who have, or are at risk of, developmental delay. This includes children with a physical disability.

These services can support your child in their play and independence, as well as develop their communication skills, and gross and fine motor movements.

The department also provides information for families on a range of

topics and will support you to connect with other services and supports such as playgroups, childcare and parent support groups.

Children are prioritised for services according to their level of need and availability of places.

Early childhood development programs and services

Therapy and early intervention services are available through the Queensland Department of Education, Training and Employment for children from birth to pre-Prep age who have a suspected or diagnosed disability with significant educational needs. This includes children with a physical disability.

Programs and services may include playgroup session, outreach support in your home, centre-based sessions and support to transition to Prep. The program can also provide access to advisory visiting teachers, who have specialist knowledge and skills to support your child at school.

Find out more

Early Intervention for Children with a Physical Disability initiative

Cerebral Palsy League of Queensland

07 3358 8011

www.cplqlld.org.au

Montrose Access

07 3379 9200

www.montroseaccess.org.au

Sunshine Coast Children's Therapy Centre

07 5441 7199

www.scctc.org.au

Early intervention services

Disability Services service centres
13 QGOV

www.communities.qld.gov.au

Better Start

Children with a physical disability resulting from cerebral palsy may be eligible for supports and services through the Australian Government's Better Start for Children with a Disability initiative.

Through Better Start children can be registered to access early intervention funding of up to \$12,000 (up to a maximum of \$6000 in any one financial year). Families have up until their child's seventh birthday to use this funding.

Better Start funding can be used to pay for early intervention services provided by a range of early intervention professionals who are Better Start service providers. These professionals include speech and language pathologists, audiologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, orthoptists and others.

Up to \$2100 (35 per cent) per year of a child's early intervention funding can be used to purchase resources. Resources must either be recommended by a Better Start service provider, be directly linked to an early intervention service or be for the delivery of interventions in the family home.

Families living in outer regional or remote areas may be eligible for an additional one-off payment of \$2000. This payment is to assist with additional expenses associated with accessing services.

Child development services

The Department of Health provides early childhood intervention services to children up to nine years of age who have a moderate to severe developmental delay or disability. Priority is given to children not eligible to receive services from other Queensland Government agencies.

Services include providing advice on your child's developmental needs and therapy services that encourage your child's development. Parent education and information sessions are also provided.

Local Area Coordinators

Local Area Coordinators link children with a disability and their families in regional, rural and remote areas with supports and services relating to their individual needs and interests.

Find out more

Early childhood development programs and services

Contact your local education regional offices www.education.qld.gov.au

Better Start

Call Carers Queensland
1800 242 636
www.betterstart.net.au

Child Development Services

13 HEALTH (13 43 25 84)
www.health.qld.gov.au

Local Area Coordinators

13 QGOV
www.communities.qld.gov.au

Support for parents

As a parent, it can be a challenge to strike the right balance between supporting your child with a physical disability and the needs of the rest of your family. It is normal to feel overwhelmed from time to time, especially during times of change, such as when your child starts school.

Make sure you have a good network of people around you, and don't be afraid to ask your GP or early intervention service provider for information about formal support such as classes, self-help groups or counselling.

You may find that the best support comes from other parents who know what you are going through. Early intervention service providers will be able to give you advice about how to link with other parents of children who have a physical disability.

You may also find it useful to access some of the following services which provide support for parents, carers and families of children with a disability.

Raising Children Network website

Raising Children Network website is an Australian Government initiative that provides a web-based source of information about parenting and child development activities for children, including children with disabilities.

Triple P — Positive Parenting Program

Triple P — Positive Parenting Program can help many families who have a child with special support needs to creatively problem solve and develop flexible and supportive family routines and strategies to support their child's learning and development.

Stepping Stones Triple P has been specially tailored for parents of children with disability. It can help parents address their children's behaviour and emotional problems which may be more challenging at

times (e.g. going to sleep, mealtimes, choosing what clothes to wear, dressing, toileting, going shopping and going to the doctors).

Stepping Stones Triple P can be accessed in different ways, including information seminars, individual sessions on specific issues, group sessions, online options, and tip sheets and workbooks.

Playgroups

Play is an integral part of all children's development, including children with disability. Through play, a child learns, builds confidence and develops a range of skills in readiness for childcare, kindergarten and school.

Playgroups nurture children with play-based learning experiences during key times of growth and development in their early years.

Playgroups offer a wonderful opportunity for young children to come together and play in a safe, relaxed and welcoming environment. Playgroups are low cost and inclusive and all children under school age are welcome.

Playgroups also help families by providing social support for parents. It provides an environment where parents can discuss and share parenting experiences and get information on how to address parenting issues.

Find out more

Raising Children Network: the Australian parent website
www.raisingchildren.net.au

Triple P – Positive Parenting Program
3236 1212
www.triplep-parenting.net

Playgroup Queensland
1800 171 882
www.playgroupqld.com.au

There are a range of playgroups available, including community playgroups, supported playgroups, PlayConnect and Playgroup Plus Program.

MyTime groups

Provide local support for mums, dads, grandparents and anyone caring for a young child under school age with disability or a chronic medical condition.

MyTime gives parents the chance to socialise and share ideas with others who understand the rewards and intensity of the caring role. Parents can meet with people in similar circumstances to have fun, hear from others and find out about available community support. Research-based parenting information is also available at group meetings.

Each group has a play helper who can lead children in activities such as singing, drawing, and playing with toys, blocks or sand so parents can spend time focusing on catching up with others.

Baby Bridges

Baby Bridges is a playgroup program for children with disability from birth to five years. Parents and carers hear up-to-date information from carers and specialists while their child attends a playgroup taken by professional occupational, music or speech specialists.

Find out more

MyTime Groups

1800 889 997

www.mytime.net.au

Baby Bridges

Contact the Horizon Foundation

07 3245 4266

www.babybridges.com.au

Find out more

Search for specialists in your local area through the websites of professional therapy associations:

The Australian Physiotherapy Association

www.physiotherapy.asn.au

Speech Pathology Australia

www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au

Occupational Therapy Australia

www.otqld.org.au

Australian Psychological Society

www.psychology.org.au

4. Early childhood education and care

What are early childhood education and care services?

Early childhood education and care services include child care and kindergarten services. Children can attend approved child care services from birth and all children are eligible to attend a kindergarten program in the year before they commence school (Prep). The Queensland Government provides funding support to approved kindergarten programs delivered in long day care or kindergarten services.

The early years of any child's life have a significant impact on their future health, development, learning and wellbeing. It is generally accepted that children who participate in early childhood education are likely to have better academic performance, better behaviour, and stay in education for longer. This includes children with a physical disability.

Participating in a quality early childhood education and care program can provide children with a physical disability opportunities to develop their social, communication and play skills from an early age.

How will my child benefit from child care?

Child care provides all children an early opportunity to relate to peers and other adults.

This is no different for children with a physical disability. It can also be an opportunity for you to receive input

from qualified early childhood professionals and try new approaches to supporting the development of your child.

As a parent child care can also provide you with opportunities to return to work, study or to have time with other members of your family

What supports are available for my child to attend child care?

The Australian Government supports children with disabilities who attend child care through the Inclusion and Professional Support Program. This support may be available to:

- subsidise the cost of additional educators or carers
- provide access to specialist equipment to assist inclusion
- provide professional development and resources for educators.

Find out more

Early childhood education and care services

Early years centres provide education, family support and health services for children 0 – 8 years.

www.dete.qld.gov.au

or phone 13 QGOV

How will my child benefit from a kindergarten program?

All children benefit from participating in an approved quality early education program, including children with a physical disability.

Participation in a kindergarten program can help your child to develop skills in communication, social interaction and behaviour. It can also assist your child to follow routines and to be exposed to early literacy and numeracy concepts.

Participation in a kindergarten program will give your child a greater chance of successfully transitioning into Prep and then into mainstream schooling.

Kindergarten programs offer play-based learning in a fun and nurturing environment.

All children benefit from these early learning experiences and develop abilities such as:

- being involved and learning to interact with other children
- developing a desire to learn as well as ways of getting involved in learning
- understanding and managing their feelings
- learning about themselves, developing their identity, confidence and independence
- building communication skills.

Tips for parents

Link your therapist or early intervention provider with your child's kindergarten teacher to help plan your child's program and identify the supports they will need, such as any aids and play equipment being used by your child.

Tips for parents

Talk to your child's kindergarten teacher about your child's strengths and areas that may need development, as well as how your child may prefer to learn new things.

How will my child be supported in a kindergarten program?

Kindergarten teachers in kindergarten services and long day care services can access support to assist children with a physical disability to participate in their programs.

Children with disability, including children with a physical disability, can receive additional supports to participate in a kindergarten program. Kindergarten services can apply under the Disability Support Funding Program through the Department of Education, Training and Employment, to receive additional funding to support your child's participation in their kindergarten program.

Additional support may include:

- equipment and play resources
- training and professional development for kindergarten teachers
- extra teacher aide time to support the child's inclusion in the kindergarten program.

Kindergarten programs in long day care services, may be eligible for the Australian Government's Inclusion and Professional Support Program which provides professional development and other assistance to child care services supporting children with additional needs.

Kindergarten teachers can modify the kindergarten program to support the inclusion of your child. The wider kindergarten community can also be provided with information about physical disabilities to encourage inclusion of your child and your family in the service.

How do I plan my child's transition into a kindergarten program?

Starting in a kindergarten program involves a significant transition for children with a physical disability and their families.

Your child will most likely need a period of preparation before they start in a kindergarten program, support to settle in, and ongoing support to ensure their needs are being met and they are achieving educational goals.

Successful transition planning requires a team approach with your family and the kindergarten teacher, which should begin six to 12 months before your child starts in the service.

Transition planning for your child to start their kindergarten program involves a range of activities including enrolment, working with the kindergarten teacher to plan a suitable program for your child and help to identify the additional supports needed, such as training and educational and play equipment.

Tips for parents

Visual supports may be useful to prepare your child for kindergarten, such as photos of your child's kindergarten teacher and their new kindergarten classroom and play area.

Other activities involved in transition planning for your child include visiting to the kindergarten to become more familiar with the environment and routines, and gradually adjusting routines at home to be similar to those they will experience in the program.

Find out more

Disability Support Funding Program, Early Childhood Education and Care Services and Kindergarten Services

www.dete.qld.gov.au

Inclusion and Professional Support Program (Australian Government)

www.mychild.gov.au

Tips for parents

Learn about the activities and routine in the kindergarten program and introduce a similar routine at home, so your child becomes familiar with these activities and routines.

5. Starting school

Starting school is an important time for children and families. The transition to school may present challenges for your child, as well as for the rest of your family, and good planning for the transition is critical. It is important to start planning for the transition to school at least 12 months before your child is due to commence.

The choice of school is a decision parents will make depending on their child's needs and abilities and the resources available. It is best to seek advice from your local school before you make a final decision.

Where can I enrol my child?

All children are able to enrol at their local state school. It is best to talk to the principal of the school that you are considering to check the types and levels of support available for your child before completing enrolment forms. You and your child may be asked to attend an interview with a staff member as part of the process.

Choosing a school for your child is an important decision. It may also be useful to talk to other parents who have children at the school you are considering.

Tips for parents

Introducing your child to the concept of timetables is a good idea for they start school. It also provides an opportunity to work with your child to develop new vocabulary they will need at school.

Getting to school — transport assistance

While it is the responsibility of parents to get their child to and from school, families who have had difficulty with transport for their child can contact the Department of Education, Training and Employment for an assessment to see if their child might be eligible for transport assistance.

The types of assistance available include passes for public transport, an allowance for driving your child to school, taxi or minibuses services, or other arrangements.

Tips for parents

Check to see if the school you are considering has an open day that you can attend with your child.

Is my child ready for Prep?

Prep is offered in all state schools as a full five-day-per-week program. To be eligible for Prep a child must turn five by 30 June in the year they start Prep. With the introduction of the Australian Curriculum, full-time attendance in Prep gives students, including students with a physical disability, the foundation they need for successful learning in Year 1.

If you are concerned that your child is not ready to start Prep at that time, you can choose to start your child a year later when they reach compulsory school age (six years and six months).

You should discuss the specific needs of your child with the principal of the school you plan to enrol your child in, before you make a decision on when

your child starts Prep or school. The principal will help you determine the impact of delaying your child's entry into Prep.

Parents of compulsory school age children have a legal obligation to ensure their children are enrolled in school and attend every day of the educational program in which they are enrolled. Enrolment and full-time attendance at Prep fulfils this obligation.

How can I prepare my child for school?

Beginning school is a big step for all children and their families. Children develop at different rates and in different ways. It is important to show your child you believe they are ready for school and not show if you are worried.

We recommend that you contact your local school in the year before you enrol your child to discuss your child's individual needs. This will give the school time for planning to ensure your child has a successful and positive start to schooling.

If your child has been receiving services from an early childhood intervention service or a kindergarten program, staff from these services can provide information to the school about your child's strengths and support needs, which will assist with the transition process.

There are a number of things you can do to help prepare your child for transitioning to school. This should include visiting the school many times before starting school, initially during quiet times of the day (possibly before or after school hours) and later at busier times so your child becomes familiar with the school environment.

While some early intervention programs finish once a child starts Prep or school, other programs offer support during the transition period.

Make sure you check what other supports your early intervention service can offer you during transition. In some cases your early intervention service may be able to attend planning meetings with you and your child's Prep or school staff.

Tips for parents

As a parent, you play a vital role in your child's education. By getting involved in the school, you can help your child make a smooth and happy start to their education.

Having good communication with your child's teacher will help your child to have a successful education experience. It will also help you to quickly sort out any issues that arise.

How will my child be supported to learn at school?

The Australian Curriculum Foundation Year has been developed to give students in Prep the important foundational learning they will need for successful progression to Year 1.

The Australian Curriculum started in Queensland in the 2012 school year. It aims to provide a high-quality curriculum for all, while understanding the diverse and complex nature of students with disability. It is shaped by the proposition that each student can learn and the needs of every student are important.

The principal is responsible for ensuring that all students with disability are provided with appropriate adjustments to enable them to access the curriculum.

When required, students who have a physical disability can be supported through appropriate adjustments made by teachers and schools in relation to:

- what a student learns
- how the student learns and instructional processes
- how the student demonstrates what they have learned
- the environment in which the student learns.

Student support services

Students who have a physical disability are likely to require additional educational support so they are able to access and participate at school alongside their same age peers.

These students can be supported through the full array of student support services allocated to regions and schools. This may include assistive technology, specialised equipment, special provisions for assessment, and access to specialist advisory visiting teachers.

Students may also have access to speech and language pathologists, teacher aide support, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and guidance officers. Talk to your child's school about these services.

Equipment at school

Education Queensland has an equipment loans service for students with disability who attend state schools. Schools can borrow specialised equipment and assistive technology from a regionally managed loans service to trial with students with disability. This helps schools to identify and make decisions about appropriate resources to support students' educational programs. The equipment remains the property of the Department of Education, Training and Employment.

Non-government schools

Catholic Education's Education Adjustment Program supports students who have a disability in Catholic schools by identifying the educational adjustments required by a school to meet the learning and teaching needs of your child. Other non-government schools may have specialist services for children with a physical disability — check with the principal of the school you are considering.

Local schools

Education for children with a disability: a guide for parents

School Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities

Support for children with a disability at school

www.education.qld.gov.au

Delayed entry to prep

www.dete.qld.gov.au

Australian curriculum

www.australiancurriculum.edu.au

6. Aids, equipment and assistive technology

If your child's disability affects their functioning across a range of areas, you may need to access assistive technology, specialised equipment or other aids to assist them in their daily living, communicating, learning, therapy and play. Professionals involved in your child's health, education and therapy will be able to give you advice regarding the most appropriate aids, equipment and assistive technology to consider.

This section details some services that may assist you to access support in this area.

Department of Health — Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme

The Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) provides access to subsidy funding for the provision of MASS endorsed aids and equipment to eligible Queensland residents, including children with disability.

The range of MASS aids and equipment is aimed at assisting people to live at home and include mobility aids, communication aids, continence aids and daily living aids.

Aids and equipment are subsidy funded either on a permanent loan basis, private ownership or through the purchase of consumables.

Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

Assistance can be provided to purchase aids, equipment and assistive technology for eligible children if the item is related to the disability and encourages independence and community participation. To access this

assistance, a prescription from your child's therapist is required.

The Community Aids Equipment and Assistive Technologies Initiative

The Community Aids Equipment and Assistive Technologies Initiative subsidises aids and equipment for eligible clients. Categories for aids and assistive technologies include Community Mobility, Communication Support, Active Participation and Postural Support.

Vehicle Option Subsidy Scheme

The Vehicle Options Subsidy Scheme supports people with disability, their families and carers to have improved access to private transport. Subsidies are available to eligible clients for assessment and prescriptions; vehicle modifications, and specialist driving lessons.

For more information, contact your nearest Disability Services service centre.

Tips for parents

Children with a physical disability may fatigue more easily than other children as they need to concentrate harder. Try more activities that will help your child build their concentration levels such as structured play and reading activities.

Department of Education, Training and Employment

Education Queensland has an equipment loan service for students with disability. This service provides specialised equipment for students with disability if it supports their educational program. The equipment remains the property of the school when a student leaves.

LifeTec

LifeTec Queensland provides information, consultation, and education on assistive technology which aims to help improve quality of life and increase independent living skills. LifeTec has offices in Brisbane and Townsville and has a mobile outreach team that offers services across the state.

All Abilities Playgrounds

All Abilities Playgrounds are specifically designed to enable children with and without disability to enjoy fun and challenging play together, side-by-side. There are 17 playgrounds located across the state.

There is also an All Abilities ePlayground which offers free online fun and games for children of all abilities.

Noah's Ark Toy Library

Noah's Ark Educational Resources and Toy Library has a wide range of toys and equipment, some of which are designed and adapted for children with disabilities or special needs.

To borrow from the Noah's Ark Educational Resources and Toy Library, you will need to be a member of Noah's Ark.

Membership is open to:

- families with a child with a diagnosed disability
- schools supporting a child or children with diagnosed disability
- community organisations supporting a child or children with diagnosed disability
- children's services supporting a child or children with diagnosed disability
- Professionals (e.g. teachers, therapists) supporting a child or children with diagnosed disability.

Find out more

Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme

www.health.qld.gov.au

Disability Services service centres

13 QGOV

www.communities.qld.gov.au

CAEATI

www.disability.qld.gov.au

Education Queensland

www.education.qld.gov.au

Lifetec

www.lifetec.org.au

All abilities playgrounds

www.communities.qld.gov.au

Noah's Ark Toy Library

1300 497 437

www.noahsark.net.au

For further information contact the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services:

Telephone: 13 QGOV (13 74 68)

Telephone Typewriter (TTY): 133 677

Email: disabilityinfo@disability.qld.gov.au

Web: www.communities.qld.gov.au

If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service:

- TTY users phone 133 677
- Speak and Listen users phone 1800 555 727 then ask for 13 QGOV (13 74 68)
- Internet relay users connect to the NRS (www.relayservice.com.au) and then ask for 13 74 68

Other languages and formats:

If you need the assistance of an interpreter, please contact the Translating and Interpreting Service, TIS National, on 13 14 50 and ask to be connected to the Disability Information Service.

This document is available in alternative formats (including large print) on request. If you would like a copy in another format, please contact Disability Information Service on 13 QGOV or email disabilityinfo@disability.qld.gov.au

* Calls from mobile phones are charged at applicable rates.

Queenslanders now have access to disability related information at one easy online location. Visit www.qld.gov.au/disability to find out about government supports and services for people with disability, their families and carers. The website includes links to information about support groups and counselling, education and where to access help.

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Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services
GPO Box 806
Brisbane Q 4001

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