

Autism SA - Service Description

Early Years Intervention Program

The **Early Intervention Foundation Skills Program** is designed for children below school age and focuses on the development of communication, social and play skills; in addition to skills each child will need for preschool and school settings. Activities and interventions include mat time, play skills, fine and gross motor experiences, music and movement, sensory and relaxation, communication and social skills. The program aims are driven by the specific needs of each individual. Outcomes include:

- facilitation of skills required for preschool and school environments
- development and extension of communication skills
- encouragement of social skill development
- encouraging independence and self-help skills throughout the daily routine and transitions
- provision of sensory motor experiences
- development of ongoing communication with families and relevant others to build and share knowledge and skills that are required to further each child's development.

The **Early Intervention Program** provides individual and group services and is delivered by a multi-disciplinary team consisting of Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists, Developmental Educators and Consultants. The program supports learning and educational development opportunities to assist children's participation in early childhood settings and to prepare them for entry into schools. These services may include ongoing Early Childhood Consultancy, specialised groups, Speech Pathology or Occupational Therapy within the home, clinic, community and/or early childhood setting.

School Support Program

The **School Inclusion Program** consists of a multi-disciplinary team that supports students with Autism Spectrum Disorder within the educational setting they attend. The School Inclusion Program is based in metropolitan Adelaide and the team includes School Inclusion Consultants, School Inclusion Facilitators, Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and Psychologists.

The School Inclusion Program responds to direct requests for service from schools. The largest percentage of requests is for intensive social skill development, challenging behaviour, assisting with self-regulation and anxiety. Other reasons for requesting services include risk of placement, bullying and harassment, speech pathology, occupational therapy and Psychology assessment and consultation.

The support provided by the School Inclusion Program is short term, intensive and focuses on developing essential skills to assist individuals to participate and learn more effectively, in conjunction with building the capacity of the school staff. Specific goals are set for each student receiving Intensive Support utilising the SMART1 approach. Programs and strategies relevant to the developmental priorities are tailored specifically to the individual from observation, assessment, and feedback from the school and individual. The program is reviewed and evaluated to determine the achievement of goals in collaboration with school staff.

Consultancy Support to school communities consists of information and advice on behaviour management techniques and strategies, curriculum adaptation, teaching methodology, resources and specific programs to support individual's specific needs. This support comes in the form of direct visits, telephone consultancy and email and can include speech pathology, occupational therapy and psychology.

Facilitator Support consists of direct one-on-one support to the student within the classroom setting or working with the student in an allocated area. In most circumstances after observations, discussions with relevant school staff and parents the student may leave the classroom environment to work on specific tasks and then towards the end of support transitioned back into the classroom environment to assist in the generalisation of skills. The skills are generally based around anxiety, behaviour, social skills, sensory, fine motor and communication. On occasions if support is required to develop social skills groups have been set up within the school environment with other students on the spectrum. - Teachers and School Support Officers are encouraged to attend all or some of the sessions to build capacity to ensure ideas and strategies can be followed through and sustained within the school setting.

The **Outreach** component of support from Autism SA incorporates visits to rural and remote regions and the Greater Adelaide regions of South Australia once per term. These visits may be undertaken by a range of staff such as school Inclusion Consultants, School Inclusion Facilitators, Speech Pathologists or Occupational Therapists.