

# My child has Autism Spectrum Disorder

Information for Queensland families of children aged 9–17



Photo by kanyong / Stockphotos



*A Parent Connect resource*

# Message from the Minister



Finding out your child has received an autism spectrum diagnosis can be confronting and overwhelming news for the whole family. Understanding your child's diagnosis is an important step in knowing what to do next and how best you as a parent can support your child.

Comfort may be found in talking to other families who have experienced a similar diagnosis. While currently there is no cure for autism, there is strong evidence that early intervention can have a positive influence on a child's development.

*My child has autism spectrum disorder* provides valuable knowledge and information to enable you to understand your child's diagnosis and help your family support your child the best way you can.

This resource also includes practical information about what services and programs are available for your child.

The Queensland Government is committed to improving direct services to families. We will do this by delivering more assistance to families of young children through our Parent Connect initiative, and by increasing the number of speech and language pathologists for all children with disability in Queensland schools.

As we deliver new priorities for Queensland, I look forward to enabling a brighter future for Queensland families of children with autism spectrum disorder.

I would like to thank Autism Queensland for their contributions to this guide and for their ongoing support for children with autism and their families.

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

# Contents

1. About autism spectrum disorder .....	4
2. Diagnosis .....	7
3. Services .....	9
4. School .....	12
5. Transition from school.....	15
6. Aids, equipment and assistive technology .....	18

# 1. About autism spectrum disorder

This guide is intended to answer some of the questions you may have if you are concerned your child or teenager has autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or they have recently been diagnosed with ASD.

If your child is under nine years of age, see the parents' resource *My child has autism spectrum disorder: an information resource for children ages birth to eight*.

People with ASD have difficulties communicating and interacting socially. They may also demonstrate repetitive and inflexible behaviours, and have difficulty coping with change. They can have unusually narrow areas of interest. There can be great variability in the range of difficulties that people experience, and in how much this impacts on their day to day life.

ASD is caused by abnormal brain development. It is usually detected in early childhood, however, in some children and adolescents it does not become obvious until the primary or even secondary school years, when the need to interact socially increases. This may be the case for those with milder symptoms and fewer support needs.

ASD lasts throughout a person's life but many people with ASD develop effective strategies to manage the symptoms of ASD as they get older.

There is no known cause for ASD and currently no cure, but our understanding of ASD is continuing to evolve with new research.

ASD will affect each young person differently. Some children with ASD will need lifelong support and services,

while others will be able to achieve academically and socially.

As a parent, you should have the same aspirations for your child with ASD as any of your other family members. This age is an important period in their life. You can best support your child's development by encouraging their strengths, skills and interests, which will help them to learn, communicate and socialise

## What are the signs of ASD?

All young people develop at different rates. You can monitor your child's development by checking if they are achieving various developmental milestones.

Young people with ASD may experience a range of difficulties, but each person is different.

For example, some young people with ASD may have limited speech or no speech while others have extensive vocabularies, but still find it very difficult to interact socially. Pre-teenagers and teenagers may display a lack of eye contact and may have difficulty conversing with others. Some may make inappropriate comments during conversations, while others may not understand irony or sarcasm. They can have difficulties with sharing or taking turns, understanding the needs or wants of others and making close friendships.

Some will have unusual language patterns, such as speaking in a very formal way with a monotone voice and limited use of non-verbal communication, such as hand gestures.

Pre-teenagers and teenagers may have narrow interests or become easily fixated on a favourite topic. They may focus on order and routine or compulsive or repetitive behaviour.

Some young people with ASD respond in unusual ways to sensations. For example, they may be unusually upset by sudden loud noises, bright lights, or someone touching them.

Epilepsy or seizures may be present from early childhood or develop in adolescents with ASD.

There will possibly also be differences in behaviour or characteristics as your child moves into adolescence.

## Characteristics of teenagers with ASD

The teenage years are likely to be a time of stress and confusion for any child, and this includes teenagers with ASD. Many teenagers are concerned with appearance, popularity, grades, and relationships, but teenagers with ASD may also be dealing with a growing awareness that they are different from their peers.

For some teens this awareness may encourage them to learn new behaviours and try to improve their social skills. At other times, hurt feelings and problems connecting with others may lead to stress, fear of failure, a lack of self control, low self-esteem, depression or anxiety.

Teenagers with ASD may express the tension and confusion that can occur during adolescence through increased challenging behaviours and may need support to understand and communicate these feelings and to learn skills to negotiate this stage of their life. Teenagers with ASD will need support to help them understand the physical changes and sexual maturation they experience during adolescence. Adolescents with ASD can have difficulty coping with social changes such as new rules or pressures about relationships and

friendships, and how to express responses and feelings appropriately. Like all teenagers, they may need support and careful guidance about sexuality, puberty, hygiene and managing their emotions.

The information provided in this resource will be able to point you in the right direction of parent networks and additional resources that provide a wealth of information about responding to the hormonal changes and unique challenges a teenager faces.

## Levels of ASD

While children and teenagers may have overlapping symptoms, the symptoms of ASD may vary considerably. Three levels are used to describe the level of support required ranging from 'Level 1: Requiring Support' to 'Level 3: Requiring Substantial Support' in the areas of social communication, restricted interests and repetitive behaviours.

Some children with ASD may also be diagnosed with intellectual impairment, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder, anxiety disorder, or a specific language disorder.

### Tips for parents

Autism Queensland's website provides in-depth descriptions and examples of ASD behaviours that children, teenagers and adults may demonstrate, as well as information for parents, carers, siblings and partners on how to support positive behaviours. It provides advice for parents and a thorough discussion of the services and supports available. [www.autismqld.com.au](http://www.autismqld.com.au)

## How common is ASD?

It is estimated that between one in 100 and one in 160 children has autism, making it more common than many other childhood conditions.

The number of children diagnosed with autism has increased significantly over the past 15 years. However, it is unknown if this is a result of an actual increase in the number of children with autism (prevalence rate) or whether it is a result of improved practices in diagnosis and increased public awareness about autism.

There are gender differences in the occurrence of autism. Boys are four times more likely than girls to have autistic disorder and boys are nine times more likely than girls to have Asperger's disorder.

**Find out more**

**Autism Queensland:**

[www.autismqld.com.au](http://www.autismqld.com.au)

**Epilepsy Queensland**

[www.epilepsyqueensland.com.au](http://www.epilepsyqueensland.com.au)



## 2. Diagnosis

Having your child or teenager assessed and diagnosed as having ASD will enable access to services to support your child's development in a range of areas.

The diagnosis of conditions on the autism spectrum is based on observations of social and communication difficulties, narrow interest areas, and rigid and repetitive behaviours.

If you notice delays in your child's development, or your child is developing unusual behaviours, you may wish to discuss your concerns with your doctor (GP) or teacher. This may result in a referral to a medical specialist, such as a paediatrician, and/or an allied health professional for further advice or a diagnosis.

### Who provides a diagnosis of ASD in Queensland?

There is no medical test, such as a blood test or brain scan, for diagnosing ASD. A diagnosis is based on information provided about a child's development, observing their behaviour, and the use of educational and psychological tests.

In Queensland, paediatricians, psychiatrists and neurologists assess and diagnose children with ASD. Input related to diagnosis may be sought from speech language pathologists, occupational therapists and psychologists. Child psychiatrists also diagnose ASD in the case of older children. Paediatricians, psychiatrists and neurologists can be seen privately or through the public health system. There will usually be costs for private doctors, however, waiting times for an appointment may be shorter. The consultation will be at no cost if it is

with a doctor in the public health system. Families living in rural and remote areas can access visiting Queensland Health specialist doctors.

For information on how to access a visiting specialist doctor and other key services to obtain a diagnosis (particularly in rural and remote areas of the state), please see page 9 for contact details of Local Area Coordinators, or contact Autism Queensland's Information and Help Line.

If you are concerned about your child's diagnosis or would just like another opinion, there is nothing wrong with getting a second opinion. This may confirm the original diagnosis or it may identify other issues with your child's development.

#### Tips for parents

For information on diagnosis and services for children with autism, visit [www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

### After diagnosis

It is not unusual for parents to feel overwhelmed when they first learn about their child's diagnosis of ASD. Even if you have suspected for some time that your child may have ASD, it is important to recognise that you are likely to need extra support. You may get this support from your family and friends, but it is also good to talk to your GP. Your GP can tell you about local parent support groups.

When your child receives a diagnosis of ASD, a number of things will happen. Options for support will be explored and a support plan will be developed. You will receive information on the services and

supports available in your local community.

Children with ASD are more likely to have other problems (e.g. sleep difficulties, restricted diet, epilepsy and behavioural difficulties). Discuss these issues with your GP or paediatrician as these associated problems may be able to be successfully treated.

Should your child receive a diagnosis of ASD, you may also be eligible for additional assistance such as a Carer's Payment, Carer's Allowance or Child Disability Assistance Payment.

## 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 more information.

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

## Tips for parents

Keep a diary or video in situations where you notice your child behaves differently from other children or teenagers, to discuss with your GP, allied health professional, teacher or paediatrician.

## Find out more

You can search for specialists in your local area through the websites of professional therapy associations:

### Speech Pathology Australia

[www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

### Occupational Therapy Australia

[www.otqld.org.au](http://www.otqld.org.au)

### Australian Psychological Society

[www.psychology.org.au](http://www.psychology.org.au)

### Queensland Patient Transport Assistance Scheme

[www.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.health.qld.gov.au)

### Centrelink

132 468

[www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)



# 3. Services

Services are available to young people with ASD to help them further develop skills in communication, social relationships and functional behaviours. Services can also assist to increase young people's independence and ability to adapt to adulthood and changing circumstances.

## Disability Services

Disability Services provides supports to children with disability and their families.

Families have access to a range of disability supports that will meet their changing needs. Some supports are funded by Disability Services and other supports are accessed through mainstream providers delivering disability-related aids and equipment, specialist therapy supports and respite services when needed.

The types of support and services that can be accessed so families can have a break from their caring role include therapy and counselling, assistance in community participation and respite.

## Respite

Disability Services allocates funding to non-government providers to deliver a range of respite services throughout the state and directly provides centre-based respite services across the state from 10 respite centres for people with a disability.

A wide range of respite services and supports are available across Queensland, and are provided by government and non-government providers.

Respite services provide an important support for carers by providing an opportunity to take time out from the carer role. Regular and timely breaks can replenish carers and as a result strengthen their ability to continue to

care for their family member with disability.

Respite services keep families resilient and can enhance the skills and community connections of the young person with disability.

## Local Area Coordinators

Disability Service's 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.

## Autism Queensland

Autism Queensland provides a range of services to children with autism and their families, including statewide outreach education support, two independent accredited schools, statewide early intervention programs, customised home and community-based programs, family support programs and respite. Workshops and training are also available for parents and professionals.

Autism Queensland's Information and Help line offers expert ASD-specific advice five days a week.

## Asperger Services Australia

Asperger Services Australia provides support to parents, carers, families, individuals, service providers and professionals. Workshops, support groups and training are also available for parents and families.

## Helping Children with Autism Package

As part of the Helping Children with Autism Package, the Australian Government has made new Medicare

items which attract a Medicare rebate. These include occupational therapy, speech language pathology, and psychology services, available for diagnosis before 13 years and treatment items before 15 years.

## Support for parents

As a parent, it can be a challenge to strike the right balance between supporting your child with ASD 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 a new school.

Make sure you have a good network of people around you, and don't be afraid to ask your GP or 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. There are many ASD support groups throughout Queensland and these groups are there to help families at whatever stage of their journey.

For a current list of ASD support groups and contacts please visit the Autism Queensland website. Service providers will be able to give you advice about how to link with other parents of children who have ASD.

### The Developing Foundation

The Developing Foundation provides information and support to families who have a child with ASD.

### The Umbrella Network

The Umbrella Network is based in Rockhampton and is a network of support and information for families who have a child with disability, including ASD.

### Raising Children Network website

The Raising Children Network 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 parents who have a child with 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 specifically tailored for parents of children with disability. It can help parents address their children's behaviour and emotional problems (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 for parents.

## Vacation care

Throughout the school holidays, families may choose to access a vacation care program for their child. Vacation care may be sought due to work commitments, a desire to provide children with varied activities, a need to continue the routine of accessing a regular activity outside the home, or a chance for parents to have a break.

If you are planning on accessing a vacation care program for your child, it is important to talk to the service and book in advance, as many programs fill quickly.

A range of vacation care options exist within Queensland, however, ASD or disability-specific programs tend to be located in the Brisbane area.

The maximum funding available to eligible children is equivalent to 25 hours of care per week for 42 weeks of the year during term time; support for

eight hours per day for six days during pupil-free days; and 40 hours of care per week for 12 weeks of the year during vacation periods. Funding levels will be determined by the national Inclusion Support Subsidy Provider.

When enrolling your child in vacation care, remember this is a new location and environment and your child may need time to become familiar with the new routines, people and activities.

### Sibling support

Autism Queensland offers a range of Family Support Services to assist families and carers of people who are living with ASD, including separate activities for mothers, fathers and siblings.

A range of sibling programs are available for siblings between the ages of six and 15 years. Availability and types of programs will vary depending on your location.

Group programs aim to help siblings to:

- explore and develop an understanding of ASD
- meet other siblings and understand they are not alone
- have the opportunity to discuss feelings without judgement
- develop a toolbox of strategies to help manage their feelings
- explore and develop support networks
- have time that is all about them and have fun.

Siblings Australia is a national organisation that offers a range of services for siblings of children with special needs. These services include workshops, print and web resources, and networking opportunities for families across Australia.

### Find out more

**Disability Information Services**  
13 QOV

[www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)

**Autism Queensland**

<http://www.autismqld.com.au>

**Asperger Services Australia**  
3865 2911

[www.asperger.asn.au](http://www.asperger.asn.au)

**The Developing Foundation**  
3871 0530

[www.developingfoundation.org.au](http://www.developingfoundation.org.au)

**The Umbrella Network**  
49286550

[www.theumbrellanetwork.org](http://www.theumbrellanetwork.org)

**Raising Children Network: the Australian parent website**

[www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)

**Triple P — Positive Parenting Program**

3236 1212

[www.triplep-steppingstones.net](http://www.triplep-steppingstones.net)

[www.triplep-parenting.net](http://www.triplep-parenting.net)

### Find out more

**Siblings Australia**

[www.siblingsaustralia.org.au](http://www.siblingsaustralia.org.au)

## 4. School

School is generally a big part of children's and teenager's lives until the age 17 years. It is the place, apart from home, where they spend the most time and generally where they will make many of their friends.

Children will have a range of schooling experiences between the ages of nine and 17 years. During this period, they will progress through the middle years (Years 4–6) of primary school to junior secondary (Years 7–10) and senior secondary (Years 11–12). For students with ASD, careful planning is critical to assist them to successfully make these transitions

From 2015, Year 7 will become the first year of high school in Queensland. Some schools will be introducing Year 7 into high school during 2013 or 2014.

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 child are important.

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

### Student support services

Some students with disability will require additional educational support so they are able to access and participate at school alongside their same-age peers.

#### Tips for parents

Visit A Flying Start for Queensland Children: <http://flyingstart.qld.gov.au>

### Equipment at school

Education Queensland has an equipment loan service for students with disability who attend state schools. Schools can borrow specialised equipment and assistive technology from a regionally managed loan 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 ASD — check with the principal of the school.

## Transition to high school

The transition from primary to high school can be very challenging for students with ASD due to changes in location, routine, friends, staff, subjects and expectations. It is best to begin planning for the transition well in advance. This will involve making decisions about which high school your child will attend. It is important to consider your child's needs and discuss the supports that might be required with staff at the high school you are considering.

You might like to explore opportunities for your child to become familiar with their new school before their first day. Some schools have a transition program to support students with disability as they move from primary to high school. Talk to your child's teacher to see what is offered at your school.

The Department of Education, Training and Employment have produced *Education for children with disability — a guide for parents*. This publication provides you with information about choosing a school, services and support in school, and what to expect throughout the years of schooling.

## What supports are available?

Students with autism spectrum disorder may require additional educational support so they are able to access and participate at school alongside their same-age peers.

Supports may include assistive technology, specialised equipment and special provisions for assessment. Students may also have access to special education teachers, speech and language pathologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, guidance officers and teacher aide support. Talk to your child's school about these services.

## What options are available in high school?

Students can study academic subjects and undertake Vocational Education and Training (VET) while at school. VET helps students to gain practical work-related skills and prepare for the world of work. Many schools offer VET at Certificate I and II levels. Talk to your child's school about subjects and VET options.

Year 10 students develop a Senior Education and Training (SET) Plan in partnership with their parents and the school to map out a plan of action for education and training through the senior years and after school.

Learning options in Years 11 and 12 lead students towards achieving a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE), a Queensland Certificate of Individual Achievement (QCIA), a Senior Statement or a Certificate III or IV vocational qualification.

## Autism Queensland support for school-age children

Autism Queensland has two accredited, independent schools located in Brighton and Sunnybank. These schools offer tailored education and therapy programs to children with ASD aged between Prep and 18 years.

Students with ASD are supported in a group of up to six students according to their age, ability and needs. Attendance is part-time, for either one, two or three days a week for a period of one to two years. The part-time format is specifically designed to:

- enable students to maintain connections with their peer group and their local school curriculum
- enable students to practise and develop skills for generalisation



- continue social connection with their local community
- provide opportunities for observation, data collection and sharing of expertise among key stakeholders.

Students are supported throughout their placement by a multi-disciplinary team including teachers, teacher aides, social workers, psychologists, speech language pathologists and occupational therapists.

Autism Queensland's comprehensive educational approach for school-aged children is a curriculum focused on the core characteristics of ASD — social skills, communication, adaptive behaviour, sensory information processing, daily living skills, stress management, play and recreation skills and academics (school performance and skills for learning).

Autism Queensland schools support strong links to the Australian Curriculum and specifically the personal and social capabilities aspects of this curriculum while delivering an autism specific focus.

## Outreach services

Autism Queensland provides outreach services to students with ASD in schools throughout Queensland, including state, independent and Catholic schools. This service provides information and support to parents and education staff to support the child's educational and developmental outcomes.

To be eligible for this service a student must be verified by the relevant education system and have an Individual Education Program. If you are unsure if this applies to your child speak to your child's school or contact Autism Queensland directly.

Further information about the Outreach Service and a School Visit Request Form is available on Autism Queensland's website.

### Find out more

**Local schools can provide:**

**Education for children with disability: a guide for parents**

**School Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disability**

**Support for children with disability at school**

[www.education.qld.gov.au](http://www.education.qld.gov.au)

**Australian curriculum**

[www.australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au)

**Queensland Catholic Education Commission**

[www.qcec.catholic.edu.au](http://www.qcec.catholic.edu.au)

**Autism Queensland**

[www.autismqld.com.au](http://www.autismqld.com.au)



# 5. Transition from school

A school's responsibility for providing services ends when a teenager with ASD:

- reaches the age of 18, or
- completes Year 12 or equivalent, or
- completes 24 semesters of schooling, or
- has completed additional approved semesters.

Before that time, it is important to research options and to talk to your teenager about possible employment options, living arrangements and any tertiary study

Year 10 students complete a Senior Education and Training Plan. This is a good opportunity to formally document goals and aspirations around employment and how to reach those goals.

## Preparing for your teenager's transition to adulthood

Detailed transition planning that takes account of individual needs and preferences and set goals for life after school can help make the transition process effective.

An important part of this transition is teaching young people with ASD to self-advocate. This means allowing them to develop independence and start to take on more responsibility for their education, employment, health care and living arrangements where possible.

Talk with other parents and find out what supports and living arrangements have worked for their family member with ASD. Local advocacy groups may also be able to help you find programs and services that your child is eligible to receive as an adult.

Some examples of living arrangements you may want to consider and prepare for include living with you and drawing on occasional services, living alone and using visiting services, or living with partial or full-time supervision at a group home or a long-term care facility.

Just like other young adults, those with ASD will grow when given the opportunity to make their own decisions and to choose activities, study, work and living arrangements that they find comfortable, enjoyable and suitable to their needs.

Young people with disability strive to become like every young person, independent and successful in their chosen future. Supports for young people transitioning from school are provided through a number of initiatives.

### My Future: My Life

My Future: My Life is an early intervention strategy that assists young people with disability in Years 11 and 12 to plan future career goals such as employment, education and community participation.

This initiative provides funding to eligible students with disability to assist them in pursuing the goals identified in their SET Plan.

Information about this strategy and the application process (including who is eligible to apply and how the financial assistance can be used) is available on the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services website.

### Support for school leavers

Disability Services connect people and their families with funded service providers that can help them participate in planning for their future, identify their individual goals and

assist to set out to achieve those goals.

Activities or experiences to participate in could include:

- connecting to social groups that are of interest to your teenager
- assisting to develop day-to-day living skills, including using public transport independently
- participating in courses to further enhance their skills, such as fashion design and retail
- assisting to access work experience or voluntary work
- futures planning for the transition from school to adult life.

Young people seeking supports when they leave school will need to contact their local Disability Services service centre to go through the intake, assessment and prioritisation process. If your child is eligible, a referral will be sent to a support linker who will contact you to talk about the outcome of the assessment.

This process is firmly based around the provision of a holistic, person-centred approach that strengthens the person with a disability and enhances their resilience.

It is important to understand that even if your teenager is eligible for specialist disability services, Disability Services will still need to check whether there are services available.

If your child is not eligible, the assessor will talk to you about what other supports you may be able to access and how that could happen.

### **Adult and Community Support Services**

Adult and Community Support Services are a range of professional and specialist services designed to meet the needs of you and your child. These services aim to:

- provide information about disability and link you with available services
- help your child to live a good life and participate in your community

- help carers to provide quality support.

While the nature of services may vary slightly from location to location, Adult and Community Support Services can include:

- support with planning and decision making for your child's current and future needs
- assessment, counselling and direct support in areas such as behaviour support, communication, mobility, daily living activities, community inclusion and skill development
- assessment and assistance with applying for specialised equipment (e.g. wheelchairs, communication devices)
- education and training for your child and their carers (e.g. in understanding and responding to behavioural issues or developing and using alternative means of communication)
- assessment and assistance to access respite and accommodation support services provided by Disability Services.

To be eligible for Adult and Community Support Services individuals will need to:

- have an intellectual disability and high support needs; and
- be a child aged 6–17 years receiving respite provided by Disability Services; or
- be over 18 years of age; or
- be living in a Disability Services accommodation support service.

Contact your nearest Disability Services service centre for more information and the full eligibility criteria.

### **Disability Employment Services**

Disability Employment Services are uncapped, so all eligible people with disability have immediate access to the services they need. There are no waiting lists.

Multiple existing programs have been streamlined into two clearly distinct

programs, making assessment and referral processes less complex:

- **Disability Management Service** for job seekers with disability, injury or health conditions who require the assistance of a disability employment service but are not expected to need long-term support in the workplace.
- **Employment Support Service** for job seekers with permanent disability and with an assessed need for more long-term, regular support in the workplace.

All eligible job seekers with disability will have access to individually tailored and comprehensive services that meet their needs, including capacity building, training, work experience and other interventions to help participants obtain and maintain suitable employment.

A key distinguishing feature of Disability Employment Services is their capacity to support and manage a participant's condition in the workplace, along with providing ongoing support in the workplace for as long as it is required.

### Vocational Education and Training

Vocational Education and Training (VET) refers to education and training that focuses on delivering skills and knowledge required for specific industries. It is a learning option for young people in the senior phase of learning.

Participating in VET can:

- provide credit points towards the attainment of a Queensland Certificate of Education, and/or the attainment of a nationally recognised VET qualification
- support young people's transitions to employment, vocational and higher education pathways.

### Find out more

#### **Disability Employment Services**

[www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au)

#### **Disability Services service centres**

#### **My Future My Life and Adult and**

#### **Community Support Services**

13 QGOV

[www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)

#### **VET Studies, Department of Education, Training and Employment**

[www.education.qld.gov.au](http://www.education.qld.gov.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.

## Equipment at school

Education Queensland has an equipment loan 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.

## 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 includes aids for mobility, communication, daily living and continence.

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

## Community Aids Equipment and Assistive Technologies Initiative

The Community Aids Equipment and Assistive Technologies Initiative provides aids and equipment subsidies for eligible clients to help with community mobility, communication support and active participation.

## Department of Education, Training and Employment

Education Queensland has an equipment loans 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 which offers services across the state.

### Find out more

#### **Disability Services**

13 QGOV

[www.communities.qld.gov.au](http://www.communities.qld.gov.au)

#### **Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme**

[www.health.qld.gov](http://www.health.qld.gov)

#### **Community Aids Equipment and Assistive Technologies Initiative**

[www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.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](mailto:disabilityinfo@disability.qld.gov.au)

Web: [www.qld.gov.au/disability](http://www.qld.gov.au/disability)

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](http://www.relayservice.com.au)) and then ask for 13 QGOV (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 (13 74 68) or email [disabilityinfo@disability.qld.gov.au](mailto: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](http://www.qld.gov.au/disability) to find out about government supports and services for people with disability, their families and carers. The new site includes links to information about support groups and counselling, education and where access help.

© The State of Queensland (Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services) 2014 Copyright protects this publication. Excerpts may be reproduced with acknowledgement to the State of Queensland (Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services).

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

Images: iStockphoto/Thinkstock

All images in this document are for illustrative purposes only

Information correct as at March 2014