

# **Early Childhood Intervention Services**

Flexible Support Packages

INFORMATION AND APPLICATION KIT

**May 2007**

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## Introduction

This kit contains information that will assist you to complete an application for an Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) *Flexible Support Package* and details of where to send the completed form. The application form needs to be completed in full. The information you provide will be used to determine if your application is successful.

The Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) *Flexible Support Packages* commenced in October 2005, as part of the State Government's social policy statement *A Fairer Victoria: Creating Opportunity and Addressing Disadvantage*. This additional funding enables the establishment and implementation of new *ECIS Flexible Support Packages* to 355 children and families, every year.

These new *ECIS Flexible Support Packages* form part of the Early Childhood Intervention Services programs. The establishment of this new program recognises that some parents require additional support to care for their child with a disability. The packages also provide additional capacity to put in place a range of flexible supports to assist your child's development.

Support available through this initiative may include therapy, respite, access to specialised equipment, and assistance for children to participate in everyday activities in the community such as playgroups and childcare in response to the individual needs of children and families.

*ECIS Flexible Support Packages* are funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and provided by nine Community Service Organisations in each of the eight DHS regions. A list of these service providers is included at the back of this information kit as Appendix 1.

## Early Childhood Intervention Services

Early Childhood Intervention Services (ECIS) are provided to children, who have a disability or developmental delay, prior to school entry, and their families. The services include information and support, planning and service coordination, and individual and group therapy and education. Services are tailored to meet the individual needs of the child and focus on supporting the child in natural environments, in their everyday experiences and activities.

ECIS are funded by DHS and provided by over 60 ECIS agencies and eight DHS managed Specialist Children's Services teams.

## ECIS Flexible Support Packages

*Flexible Support Packages* are to deliver supports and services that are:

- Planned, organised and coordinated as part of the child's current program and family supports;
- Developmentally appropriate for the child; and
- Monitored through the Family Service and Support Plan.

*ECIS Flexible Support Packages* can alter over time to address the changing needs of the child and family.

The packages provide time limited support to address a specific need not available from ECIS and are not intended to duplicate ECIS.

The new packages have been developed to complement the existing Disability Services Division Flexible Support Packages and related ECIS and other Early Years Services.

## Eligibility to Apply

Children, prior to school entry, with a disability or developmental delay and their families, who require a range of coordinated services and a level of support not usually available through universal services are eligible to apply for *ECIS Flexible Support Packages*.

Children currently receiving ECIS support either from a Community Service Organisation or DHS regional Specialist Children Services Team are part of the eligible client group for an *ECIS Flexible Support Package*.

To be eligible to apply for an *ECIS Flexible Support Package*, children with a disability or developmental delay do **not** have to be receiving ECIS, but do need to be eligible for ECIS.

## Priority of access to *ECIS Flexible Support Packages*

There are a number of factors, which assist Community Service Organisations in determining the priority and allocation of packages for children and their families. These include:

- Children with complex support needs (other than high medical) such as social, behavioural and emotional needs;
- Safety issues in relation to the child's behaviour affecting the ability of parents and others to meet the child's needs;
- Children who are at a transition point in their lives, or at a critical developmental stage.
- Families who demonstrate significant levels of stress/anxiety and are at risk of breaking down;
- Families who have limited support networks and who may not be receiving any service.

## Application Process

### How to apply

A copy of the application form for *ECIS Flexible Support Packages* is attached. Parents or service providers may complete the form. A Family Service and Support Plan forms part of the application and is to be attached to the *ECIS Flexible Support Packages* application.

Assistance in completing the application form can be provided by the:

- Family Services Coordinator where a child is already receiving ECIS (either from DHS or a Community Service Organisation); or
- *ECIS Flexible Support Packages* service provider.

To get an application form and further information about *ECIS Flexible Support Packages* contact the *ECIS Flexible Support Package* service provider located in the Department of Human Services region where you/the family live.

The application form is also available on the DHS website at:

[http://www.office-for-children.vic.gov.au/ecis/publications/flexible\\_support\\_packages](http://www.office-for-children.vic.gov.au/ecis/publications/flexible_support_packages)

When the *ECIS Flexible Support Packages* provider receives an application, it is then forwarded to the Regional Assessment Panels for consideration.

## Family Service and Support Plan

A Family Service and Support Plan identifies specific child and family goals and a range of strategies, services and supports required to achieve these goals. Regular monitoring and review of goals, to respond to the changing needs of the child and family, is part of the Family Service and Support Plan process. Family Service and Support Plans are reviewed at a minimum of twelve monthly intervals.

The Family Service and Support Plan must be attached to the *ECIS Flexible Support Package* application.

For children attending an ECIS program (either through DHS or a Community Service Organisation) a Family Service and Support Plan has already been completed and should be used to guide the *ECIS Flexible Support Package* application and its draft expenditure plan.

Where an application is completed for a child who is not attending an ECIS program then a Family Service and Support Plan will need to be developed by the *ECIS Flexible Support Package* service provider in consultation with the family.

## Family Service Coordinator

A Family Service Coordinator is a designated individual who works closely with the child and family to identify and coordinate services and to monitor the child and family's changing needs. The Family Service Coordinator assists families to plan and coordinate programs to address all areas of the child's development through play and daily activities and to provide ideas that will promote the child's development. In many instances, the Family Service Coordinator will also be the ECIS contact who works directly with the child and the family.

Family Service Coordinators may also be known as Key Workers or Case Managers.

## Estimated Expenditure Plan

An Estimated Expenditure Plan forms part of the *ECIS Flexible Support Package* application. This part of the application asks for **estimates** of the type, amount and duration of the supports requested and their associated costs.

When the panel endorses an application, the *ECIS Flexible Support Package* service provider will progress an approved expenditure plan.

## Regional Assessment Panel

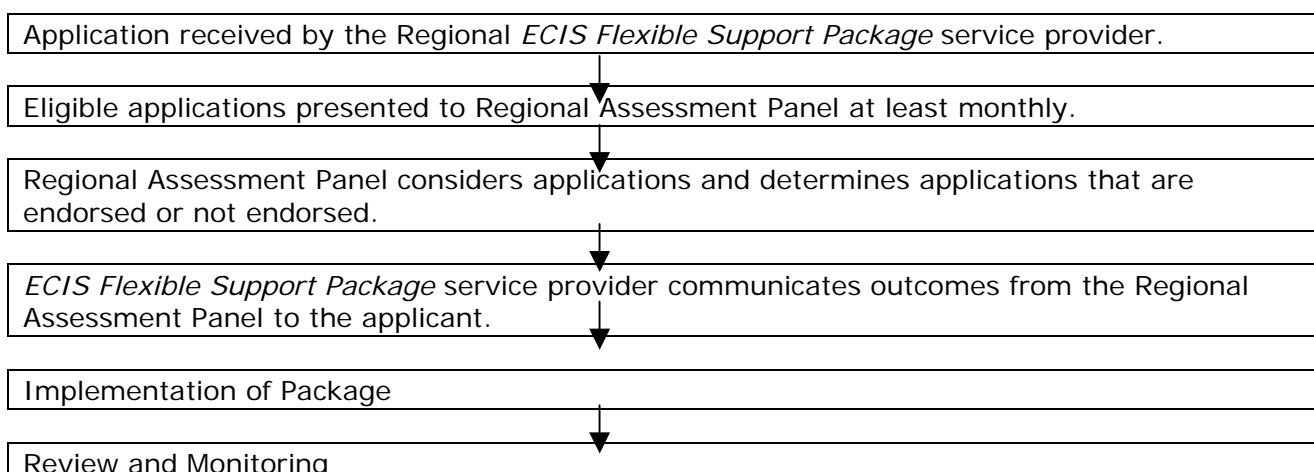
Each Regional Assessment Panel (panel) considers the eligible applications received by the *ECIS Flexible Support Package* service provider. The panel is responsible for determining if applications are endorsed or not endorsed, in accordance with the priority of access guidelines outlined above.

The panel meets at least monthly to consider *ECIS Flexible Support Package* applications that it receives. There is also capacity for each panel to provide interim service responses for applications where necessary.

## Where to send the Application Form

The completed Application Form is to be forwarded to the *ECIS Flexible Support Package* service provider. Attachment 1 provides a list of *ECIS Flexible Support Package* service providers in Victoria.

## Application Process



## Package Funding Amount

Not all families will receive the same amount of resources through an *ECIS Flexible Support Package*. The *Packages* are to be flexible and responsive to the needs of children with a disability or developmental delay, and their families. The 2006-07 average price of \$5,145 is an indicative price. Some children and their families will receive more than the average unit price and some will receive less, depending on their needs.

When Family Service and Support Plans are reviewed additional needs may be demonstrated. It should be noted that a *Package* might be provided through more than one application, over the financial year.

## Privacy of Information

Legislation regulates the handling and management of personal information that the Department of Human Services and our funded service partners collect as part of service provision. Relevant legislation includes the *Information Privacy Act 2000* (Vic) and the *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic).

### Privacy legislation:

- Seeks to provide safeguards in relation to the use and disclosure of personal and health information;
- Complements and promotes good business practices and seeks to give individuals control over how their personal and health information is used and shared;
- Protects personal and health information through its entire life cycle — from collection to destruction;
- Ensures that services only use personal and health information for authorised purposes and protects personal and health information from misuse and unauthorised disclosure; and
- Provides individuals with a mechanism for gaining access to their personal and health information.

A copy of the DHS Privacy Policy is attached for your information.

## Appeals Process

If your application for funding for an ECIS Flexible Support Package is not endorsed, the following information is provided for your consideration.

Appeals will be conducted only on the basis of new or additional information, which may not have been available at the time of application, or if circumstances have changed.

For additional information, please contact the Flexible Support Package Coordinator at <name of organisation> <phone number>