

## ROLE OF THE PROGRAM SUPPORT GROUP

The Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) Program contributes to the provision of a quality kindergarten program. The KIS Program focuses on enhancing a kindergarten's capacity to provide a program that is responsive to the individual abilities, interests and needs of children with a disability and ongoing high support needs in an inclusive kindergarten environment.

The Program Support Group (PSG) brings together key people to support the planning for inclusion of children with disabilities or developmental delays, or on-going high-support needs or complex medical needs, from the time of enrolment in a kindergarten program.

### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE PROGRAM SUPPORT GROUP?

The work of the PSG is underpinned by the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and demonstrates the implementation of the associated practice principles; in particular, partnerships with families and partnerships with professionals.\*

The PSG has an ongoing role beginning before the child commences the kindergarten program until they have transitioned into school.

The PSG:

- meets at least once per term to support the child's learning and development and health and wellbeing
- shares knowledge and understanding of the child's interests, abilities and support requirements
- shares expertise to inform the development of an inclusive program that is responsive to the

child's learning and development needs

- identifies resources and staffing options to maximise opportunities existing within the kindergarten
- supports the development of an inclusive program that encourages the engagement of all children in a range of learning and development experiences and opportunities
- supports transition into the kindergarten program and into school
- coordinates services and supports for the child.

The agenda for the PSG meetings should be set around the outcomes of the review of the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Plan, celebrating the child's achievements, discussing identified areas for additional support and planning for the child's learning and development.

Through PSG meetings, early childhood teachers work with families and other professionals to support positive participation and learning outcomes for a child with a disability or developmental delay during their kindergarten year. A PSG helps support families through the transition into kindergarten and into school, and to feel confident that their child's interests, abilities and requirements are understood.

The *Transition: A Positive Start to School Resource Kit* includes a section on enhanced transition planning for children with a disability or developmental delay and outlines strategies to support continuity of learning and development, including the role of the PSG in the transition process. See [www.education.vic.gov.au/transitiontoschool](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/transitiontoschool)

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE PSG AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

The early childhood teacher convenes the PSG and is the representative for the kindergarten program on the group. They organise meetings, and facilitate conversations to support planning for the child.

Parents attend PSG meetings to share and contribute to the development of a program that responds to their child's interests, abilities and support needs.

Any other person who supports the child's learning, development and wellbeing may be invited to attend the PSG meetings as appropriate. These people may include early childhood intervention professionals, relevant therapists or allied health professionals.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE PSG?

A key benefit of the PSG is the opportunity to develop collaborative partnerships with families and other professionals involved in supporting the child. Achieving high quality outcomes for all children requires active engagement with those who play a role in advancing children's learning, development and wellbeing.

The PSG recognises that children learn and develop within the context of their family and that genuine partnerships with families enable building on the strength of each others' knowledge. This includes valuable information about their child's strengths, abilities interests and needs. The partnership with families approach is based on understanding each other's expectations, attitudes priorities and perspectives.

The PSG supports families to feel confident through the transition into kindergarten and into school, and recognises the critical importance of the family in their child's life.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE KIS PROGRAM VISIT

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/needs/Pages/kinderinclusion.aspx>

\* In the context of this fact sheet, family may refer to biological, adoptive or step parents, siblings, grandparents or other extended family members, foster carers or other legal guardians of the child with a disability or developmental delay.