



HAWKESBURY EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION SERVICE INC. (H.E.C.I.S.)

ABN 77 638 834 599

Funding assistance provided by:
Education & Communities

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12 Stewart St, South Windsor 2756
Early Childhood Advisory Service
Early Education Support Service
Family Support Program
Early Childhood Intervention Playgroup
NDIS Provider

SUMMARY INFORMATION HANDBOOK

EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENT AND REFERRAL SERVICE

OUR VISION

The Hawkesbury Early Childhood Intervention Service seeks to provide support and advice to families who have a child with a disability by delivering services to improve the child's skills, support for inclusion in mainstream settings, and educational outcomes.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

The Staff and Management Committee of Hawkesbury Early Childhood Intervention Service believes in:

- The right of children with special needs to be provided with a range of services that meet their needs and promote optimal growth and development.
- The right of children with special needs to gain access to mainstream services as appropriate for the individual child and for their inclusion into such services to be positively supported and professionally facilitated.
- The right of families who have a child with special needs to access services available within their own community.
- The right of children with special needs to be valued as individuals with strengths and abilities who can contribute to their environment in many positive ways.
- The right of families to be supported in their parenting role and to be encouraged to have input into their child's Individual Education Program and the services provided by HECIS. HECIS Staff facilitate this by open communication, sharing of information, ideas and abilities.
- Engaging in respectful and responsive relationships with client/families and other professionals and agencies.
- Respecting client/families personal beliefs, culture and heritage.
- Being active in their own learning and critically reflect and adjust their practices accordingly.
- Being committed to achieving best practice, quality outcomes, confidentiality and continuous self-improvement/development.

What is Early Intervention?

Early Childhood Intervention encompasses a variety of community support services to children and families. These include family support services, educational support services and therapy support services. The aim of the HECIS early intervention service is to provide the child and family with appropriate support (indicated through interview, assessment and discussion) as early as possible in order to take advantage of the child's potential, at an early age, to learn new skills and concepts. Beginning as early as possible to assist a child who is presenting with delays in their development will enhance the child's ability to generalise these skills across a variety of environments, so enhancing the child's ability to communicate and to develop positive social relationships with family, adults and peers.

In reading this handbook you have already begun to take the necessary steps to address the needs of your child and are aware that some additional support for either you as a parent, or your child, or both, will assist your child's development. HECIS will ensure that your family's priorities and values are respected in providing support services and will also make additional referrals to other agencies and therapy services as required.

Early brain development research points to the wisdom and helpfulness of prevention and early intervention for young children. Well designed programs created to promote healthy cognitive, emotional, and social development can improve the prospects - and the quality of life - of many children. We hope that our service can work with you as the parent, and the child care service your child attends, in achieving improved outcomes for your child.

HECIS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SUMMARY

Welcome to Hawkesbury Early Childhood Intervention Service (HECIS). This handbook outlines the main policies and procedures of our service. A complete copy of our policies is available on the HECIS website www.hecis.org.au or at the HECIS office. This summary will assist you in your understanding of how our service provides support and our general management principles. We look forward to a constructive and helpful association with you and your child. Please do not hesitate to contact the HECIS office if you have any further questions.

1. INTAKE AND REFERRAL (ENTRY) POLICY

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for assistance for HECIS services (excluding the HECIS Playgroup):

- The child is 0-6 years of age and is prior to school entry (excepting the Skills Development Program where the child may be aged up to 8 years of age).
- The child resides in the Hawkesbury Local Government Area (LGA) or attends an early childcare service in the Hawkesbury LGA.
- Parents/carers and/or early child care staff have a concern about the child's general development or communication skills.
- The child has been referred by another early childhood specialist
- The child has a diagnosed disability/developmental delay.

2. CLIENT TRANSITION OR EXIT FROM THE SERVICE POLICY

The child will remain involved with HECIS until one or more of the following occurs:-

- The child moves onto Primary school
- The child is no longer eligible for support under HECIS funding, including no longer living within or attending a child care service within the Hawkesbury LGA.
- The child has reached their goals outlined in the clients individual service plan
- The client/family chooses to leave the service or cease services by HECIS
- The client/family wishes to transfer to other agency/professional.

HECIS is an entirely voluntary service. Families may veto any or all parts of the HECIS service at any time. A partial or full veto of any HECIS service will not prevent access to any other HECIS services. Veto may be given verbally, by email info@hecis.org.au or in writing to 12 Stewart Street, South Windsor NSW 2756.

3. PRIORITY OF ACCESS

Services are provided to children and Early Child Care Services on a non discriminatory basis in order of referral. However, children and Early Child Care Services are prioritised on the basis of relative need. Due to the limited resources available to HECIS, priority of access is given to HECIS members and to children not currently receiving support services. As children are referred to HECIS, they are placed on a waiting list.

4. CONSUMER INVOLVEMENT

Parents, carers and Early Child Care Service staff are encouraged to be involved in the decision

making process regarding the individual child, service delivery and overall service management. Consumers may be involved in HECIS by attending HECIS committee meetings, becoming an officer of the HECIS Management Committee and completing service evaluation questionnaires.

5. DEVELOPMENT and REVIEW of POLICIES and PROCEDURES

The policies and procedures of HECIS will be developed and reviewed in consultation with clients (family/ parent /carer), Early Child Care Service staff and HECIS Staff on a regular basis – annually or as the need arises. Consultation will be achieved through attendance at the Committee meetings, and through a regular newsletters to allow consumers an opportunity to feedback comments on the form provided for this specific purpose.

6. REFERRAL TO OTHER AGENCIES

The primary function of HECIS is to specifically identify areas of difficulty that a child may be experiencing and subsequently to provide educational and support services to address the needs of the child and family, and as indicated, to refer children and their families to appropriate services and agencies in the Hawkesbury area. This is done following discussion with the child's parent/carer and the Service provider.

7. PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

HECIS staff will endeavour to provide a safe and supportive environment for consumers. They will also consider the effects of their actions upon clients/families. HECIS also acknowledges challenging behaviours that can lead to self-harm or harm of others occurs for many reasons (clients disability, developmental delay or specific diagnoses) and is committed to using a person-centred approach when dealing with challenging behaviours.

If a HECIS staff member identifies the indicators of physical, emotional or sexual abuse when in contact with a child, as a Mandatory reporter under NSW Legislation are required to report to the Child Protection helpline when a child is at risk of significant harm.

HECIS understands and supports the principals of fairness and human rights in all aspects of service delivery. It will ensure that services are provided in an environment free from discrimination, financial, sexual, physical and emotional abuse, neglect or exploitation.

8. PRESERVE PRIVACY, DIGNITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All information regarding children and their families is kept strictly confidential. Information is only released and/or sought following parent/carer consent. At all times HECIS staff will treat clients with respect and dignity. Parents have the right to access their child's file on request to the HECIS Co-Ordinator.

Information stored on files is for the sole purpose of providing a quality service to the child and family. Any statistics provided to funding bodies for purposes of planning and release of funds, will retain the anonymity of the service user.

This does not prevent disclosure of any information requested by a court, regulatory body or under an applicable law.

9. COMPLAINTS

Anyone affected by the service provided by HECIS, including parents/caregivers, other service providers (child care centre staff) and professionals have the right to raise and have resolved any complaints or disputes that they may have in regard to the HECIS service.

Complaints and concerns will be dealt with in a private and confidential manner. The process for lodging a complaint and subsequent dealing with a complaint is outlined in the accompanying flowchart. If you have any further questions regarding the way HECIS conducts its service, please feel free to approach the HECIS Co-Ordinator or any of the Executive Committee members.

Names and contact numbers of the Executive Committee can be obtained through your child care service or by contacting the HECIS office.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

You can make a complaint at the level you feel most comfortable – either verbally or in writing. To aid this procedure the following steps should be taken:

CONSUMER WITH A COMPLAINT - PROCEDURE

Step 1	Discuss your concern with (or write to) the President of the Management Committee or The HECIS Co-Coordinator Telephone: 02 4587 7277
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within 14 days



Step 2	The President will contact you to discuss your concerns and attempt a resolution. If a resolution is not easily obtained the President will arrange a meeting with you to be attended by the President, and the HECIS Co-Ordinator to discuss the issues raised. You may also include a support person.
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Within 14 days



Step 3	Follow up the above meeting with the staff member or Management member concerned and arrange for the appropriate steps to be taken to resolve the issue.
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Step 4	RESOLUTION → If resolved the complaint process and resolution will be recorded in the complaints records book and brought before the next Management Committee meeting for formal resolution. NO RESOLUTION
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within 14 days



Step 5	Approach an external agency for assistance in resolving the dispute. <u>Ombudsman of NSW</u> Phone : 02 9286 1000 Toll Free: 1800 451 524 Email: nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au Fax: 02 9286 1008
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Web: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

Complaints enquiries: Monday to Friday 9am – 4pm

Complaints can be made on the *Online Complaints form* available from the website

Community Services (Complaints, Reviews and Monitoring) Act 1993 No 2

The Act provides for any person to make a complaint where relevant (orally or in writing) to the Ombudsman about the conduct of a service provider (or employee) with respect to the provision, failure to provide, withdrawal, variation or administration of a community service in respect of a particular person or group of persons.