



## Fact Sheet

### Macarthur Early Childhood Intervention Service (MECIS)

Macarthur Early Childhood Intervention Service (MECIS) is a holistic early childhood intervention program for children, birth to school age, with developmental delays and disabilities, and their families.

#### Target groups

Macarthur Early Childhood Intervention Service (MECIS) is located in Leumeah, South West Sydney. It was set up by Macquarie University in 1979 as a response to lack of services for children with developmental delay and disabilities living in South West Sydney. Campbelltown was recommended as the best location due to greater need in the Southern Macarthur region, which is a high growth area. Mission Australia took over the management of the service in 1989.

Parents can refer directly to the service, as can professionals such as doctors, teachers and support workers in other agencies, with family permission.

The program targets children from birth to school entry age, who:

- Are not meeting, or are at risk of not meeting, developmental milestones
- Have a delay in at least two areas of development (such as movement, language, play, social or thinking skills)
- Have diagnosed disability
- Have diagnosed developmental delay.

Each year MECIS assists up to 100 children and their families from the local area, with around 65 children and their families receiving a program at any one time.

#### Service activities

The team at MECIS are qualified early childhood teachers, therapists and family support workers who, with support staff and together to provide flexible and individually tailored programs for children and families.

Service delivery methods include:

- Initial planning meeting with families
- Play based individual intervention (speech and communication, physiotherapy and occupational therapy)
- Play-based individual special education
- Small play-based intervention groups
- Autism-specific programs
- Home-based intervention
- Behaviour intervention and support
- Sensory profiles
- Parent/carer support groups
- Support to early childhood services
- Transition to school support
- Coordination of individual family service plans
- Advocacy and referral

#### Outcomes

Staff and parent or carers meet prior to the child commencing any part of their program to develop an Individual Education Plan. Long-term goals are established with short-term objectives. Specific strategies are developed according to the areas of need and the type of intervention appropriate. In 2009-10 1,902 objectives were set for children, and 80% of the objectives were fully met or emerging.

Broader outcomes include:

- Children participate meaningfully in home and community activities to the extent of their ability
- Children are transitioned to appropriate school placements
- Families increase their knowledge and skills around child development and special needs.

#### Funding sources

Primary funding is received from The NSW Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care, with supplementary funding from the NSW Minister of Education and Training and administered by the Department of Education and Training. A fee-for-service income stream is generated by the autism-specific programs through Helping Children with Autism funding from the Department of Families and Community Services, Indigenous Affairs. MECIS also receives Mission Australia funding.

#### Mission Australia

Mission Australia is one of the nation's leading community service organisations, having helped transform the lives of individuals and families in need for over 150 years. Mission Australia's vision is to see a fairer Australia by enabling people in need to find pathways to a better life. We currently operate more than 550 community and employment services throughout metropolitan, rural and regional Australia, which provide:

- Pathways away from homelessness;
- Pathways to strong families and healthy, happy children;
- Pathways through a successful youth;
- Pathways to life and work-ready skills
- Pathways to sustainable employment

#### Contact information

Macarthur Early Childhood Intervention Service  
5 Kingsclare Street, Leumeah, NSW  
Telephone: (02) 4628 9332  
Fax: (02) 4628 346  
Website: [www.missionaustralia.com.au](http://www.missionaustralia.com.au)