Education and Training

Student Centred Appraisal of Need

Booklet for parents, carers and staff

January 2008

INTRODUCTION

The Student Centred Appraisal of Need provides a consistent approach to determining educational needs of individual students so that additional resources to support students with a disability can be allocated to schools on an equitable basis. It is a way of looking at the particular needs of each child and the support they require to access school programs and participate in the curriculum. You will be guided through the process by a specifically trained departmental moderator. At the end of your appraisal meeting you will receive a copy of the meeting record form detailing the student profile.

The current schedule for verifying resource allocations allows for seven appraisals throughout the years of schooling; preschool, kindergarten, Years 3, 6, 7, 10 and 11.

ABOUT THE BOOKLET

This booklet is designed to assist parents, carers and staff to prepare for the Student Centred Appraisal of Need meeting. It contains information about the process and the groups of descriptors that have been divided into ten areas of educational need. It is these ten areas that will be discussed in detail at the appraisal meeting.

The booklet is divided into two parts, reflecting two major dimensions of educational need. Part A, ACCESS, describes the broad needs a child may have in order to access the school program. The ACCESS section is divided into five areas:
- Communication
- Mobility
- Personal Care: Health & Well-being
- Personal Care: Dietary & Medical Conditions
- Safety

Part B, PARTICIPATION, takes a closer look at the student and describes their educational support needs in the context of the classroom and the Individual Learning Plan (ILP). PARTICIPATION is divided into the following five areas:
- Social Development
- Curriculum Participation
- Communication
- Behaviour
- Literacy & Numeracy

APPRAISALS AND THE INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN (ILP)

Every student who is supported with additional resources through the Special Education Section requires an ILP. Student Centred Appraisals of Need are closely linked to educational planning. To strengthen this link, the appraisal meeting will be held together with the mid-year review of the ILP for each student wherever possible. This has two benefits; firstly, that parents are not required to attend a further meeting at their child's school, and secondly that the educational support needs of each student with a disability are discussed at the same time as the ILP is being reviewed. Adjustments to the specific learning goals and priorities for learning are identified during the appraisal and are recorded on the form. This information is an important contribution to the student's

appraisal. Appraisal meetings are not generally held in conjunction with the ILP meetings during first term, as this is too early in the year to appropriately update resource allocations.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE APPRAISAL MEETING

Student Centred Appraisal meetings are an important opportunity for parents and carers to contribute to the educational program of their child. In preparation for the meeting, read this booklet carefully and consider your child's needs in each of the ten areas. Some children will only have needs in one area while others may have needs in some or all areas. Turn to each relevant page and choose the descriptors that best describe your child's support needs. You may wish to circle or highlight the group or make comments in the margin. Choose the **best match** to your child's needs, keeping in mind that not every descriptor in each group of descriptors need apply. Please note that when identifying the appropriate descriptor, the whole sentence must be considered, not selected phrases from the sentence. During the meeting the moderator will invite discussion about each area, and facilitate agreement on descriptors and a grouping.

The school will notify parents and carers of the appointment times available. Some flexibility can be accommodated and should be discussed with the principal. If you are able to attend the meeting, bring this booklet with you to help during the discussion. If you are unable to attend, you may like to make a separate appointment with the principal, or return the booklet to the school prior to the meeting with the relevant pages marked with your comments, so that your views can be fully considered.

THE MEETING

The principal or a delegate will chair the meeting and the moderator will provide information and support to the group to ensure the process is followed equitably for all students. The teacher, school counsellor, departmental staff or other staff who work with your child at school may also attend the meeting. Parents and carers are encouraged to bring an advocate or friend along if they wish. It is the moderator's role to ensure that the descriptors are applied consistently across all schools in the ACT. During the part of the meeting that centres on discussions about the descriptors most appropriate to your child, the moderator will enter the agreed groupings into a laptop program projected on to the wall for viewing by all participants. Everyone at the meeting has the opportunity to contribute their view on the descriptors that best match the student's needs. The moderator will provide guidance as necessary to ensure common interpretations of the levels of need described in each group are used across all schools. The moderator will then bring the meeting to agreement on a specific grouping. In cases where consensus cannot be easily reached the moderator may request that the principal determine the grouping. At the end of the meeting participants sign and receive a copy of the meeting record.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

To assist the moderator to ensure consistent application of the descriptors across all schools and special education programs, principals must ensure that a copy of the current ILP, and any other individualised plans that specify interventions for the students in areas such as healthcare, manual handling, behaviour management and social skills, are available at the meeting. Groupings in some descriptor areas require evidence of a

planned curriculum focus designed to address the area of need for that student in order to support recording a higher grouping. In the same way some groupings require written documents that detail a coordinated and consistent approach to management of particular features of the students' interactions or health needs.

FEEDBACK

Input from parents and carers about the Student Centred Appraisal of Need meeting is highly valued by the Department of Education and Training. Should you have any feedback on your child's meeting, please contact the Student Centred Appraisal of Need Executive Officer on 6205 0088.

Information about review and appeal processes is available from the school office, and is also on the department website at http://www.det.act.gov.au. in the publications and resources section. Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss any issues of concern about the educational program with the school principal in the first instance, as a satisfactory resolution can often be achieved at the school level.

Parents/carers can lodge a formal appeal with the department on either of the following two grounds;

1. Where an unsatisfactory level of achievement of the agreed ILP goals seems to be directly resulting from insufficient support being provided,

or

2. There is strong disagreement with the groupings recorded on the profile at the appraisal meeting.

Principals can request a formal review of the appraisal within one term or 10 weeks of the resource allocation advice on either of the following two grounds;

1. That exceptional circumstances exist within the school which result in the allocation not being sufficient to support the student
or
2. The profile was inaccurately recorded at the meeting, or is no longer an appropriate reflection of the student's needs.

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ACCESS

COMMUNICATION

This area describes the way the student communicates with others, such as with spoken language, sign or an augmented system, and the degree of support that is needed to be understood and/or to understand the communications of others at school.

This student's needs are best described by the following group -

❑ **Group 1**	• Distractions in the environment eg loud noise, bright lights, influence the extent to which the student can understand information or engage in communication. • Processing and understanding verbal language presents some difficulty. • The student communicates independently but occasionally uses augmented supports such as gesture, pictures or signs.
❑ **Group 2**	• The student uses some language but requires assistance in the form of verbal or visual aids on most occasions to assist communication. • Explicit teaching is needed to foster expressive communication skills, to improve understanding or to assist the student to participate in communication activities.
❑ **Group 3**	• The student's spoken language is supported by alternative technologies such as a voice output device. • To supplement the student's spoken language, systematic instruction in the use of a picture symbol system is needed. • The student uses sign language and requires some ongoing instruction in this communication method.
❑ **Group 4**	• All written work needs to be modified eg, text enlargements, transcribed to Braille, to enable access on the same basis as classmates. • The student uses a picture-based communication system at all times. • Requires a support person to stimulate and interpret all communication eg non-standardised gestures, vocalisations and facial expressions. • The student communicates using sign language and requires significant ongoing instruction in this communication method. • The student relies on Braille and requires extensive, ongoing instruction in this communication method.

❑ **This area is not applicable**

ACCESS

MOBILITY

This area describes how the student moves around the school. It refers to both physical capacity for movement and the level of understanding required to access the facilities at the school.

This student's needs are best described by the following group -

❑ **Group 1**	• Minimal assistance for mobility or balance such as handrails, ramp, tactile markings, a lift or staff support is needed. • Independently mobile using specialised mobility equipment and requires minimal supervision. • Requires intermittent assistance to move between classes or school activities due to anxiety or limited understanding of school routines and processes.
❑ **Group 2**	• To move around the school environment, the student requires adult support or training in the use of specialised equipment eg walking frame, callipers, wheelchair. • Has some independence with mobility but requires support to use specialised equipment eg walking frame or wheelchair.
❑ **Group 3**	• Requires a wheel chair for mobility and needs assistance to transfer to other pieces of equipment or activities eg, wheelchair to seating, to pool, to toilet, wheelchair to trampoline etc. • Requires assistance for most movement or transfers. • The student is independent within the classroom, but requires frequent support when moving around the school environment due to extreme anxiety or significant difficulty understanding school routines and processes. • The student is mobile but requires support when moving around the school due to balance or coordination issues, or supervision whilst using mobility aids.
❑ **Group 4**	• Requires intensive and long term orientation and mobility training. • Requires intensive and frequent support to maintain posture. • In order to access the school curriculum and environment, the student frequently requires assistance of more than one staff member for mobility and transfers. • Constant physical support or instructions from a close range are needed at all times when the student is moving around the classroom and the school.

❑   **This area is not applicable**

ACCESS

PERSONAL CARE: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

This area focuses on the support students need to manage personal care requirements whilst at school. It includes toileting and hygiene needs. Mealtime assistance and medication are covered in the next area.

This student's needs are best described by the following group -

❏ **Group 1**	• Requires some assistance by a staff member for toileting procedures at regular times during the school day. • Is relatively independent but requires some modifications to the school environment or class activities to allow access with dignity eg being near appropriately equipped toilets, supervision to reach or use changing facilities.
❏ **Group 2**	• Requires supervision and assistance with toileting, showering and bathing procedures throughout the school day. • Requires intervention by appropriately trained staff to assist in undertaking personal care routines hygienically.
❏ **Group 3**	• Intensive supervision and assistance of two adults is required for toileting, showering and bathing procedures. • Comprehensive support and supervision with toileting is required due to the unpredictable nature of hygiene needs. • Intensive support is required for complex toileting and personal care requirements, including the use of medical appliances associated with personal hygiene.

❏ **This area is not applicable**

Note: A Health Care plan or a Manual Handling plan will need to be sighted by the moderator for all students who are described by Group 3.

ACCESS

PERSONAL CARE: DIETARY AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS

This area covers any additional needs associated with the disability the student has, which affects food intake and medical conditions at school.

This student's needs are best described by the following group -

❑ **Group 1**	• Assistance is required for a medical condition or in the use of specialised medical equipment at specific times of the day eg, blood testing equipment, breathing apparatus. • Medication is taken at meal times with the supervision and assistance of an adult. • Is able to eat independently at meal times but requires some adult supervision for health and safety reasons. • Is at risk of allergic reactions to food or chemicals, food avoidance or intolerance requiring some adult supervision and assistance during meal times.
❑ **Group 2**	• Requires assistance from trained staff for the use or fitting of equipment or appliances. • Requires frequent daily intervention by specifically trained staff to manage a medical condition. • Is able to eat independently at meal times but requires significant adult assistance. • Is at risk of allergic reactions to food or chemicals, food avoidance or intolerance requiring regular adult supervision and assistance during meal times and potentially at other times during the school day.
❑ **Group 3**	• Ongoing and intensive monitoring is required to address emergency and life threatening situations. • Emergency equipment such as resuscitators etc, need to be on hand within the school at all times with appropriately trained staff available to administer. • Total support from an adult is required at mealtimes. • Is at risk of allergic reactions to food or chemicals, food avoidance or intolerance requiring constant adult supervision and assistance at all times of the school day.

❑   **This area is not applicable**

Note: A medical or dietary plan must be available at the appraisal meeting for all students allocated a grouping in this area.

ACCESS

SAFETY

This area focuses on safety supports needed for students whilst at school. The behaviour needs of the student will be discussed in detail in Part B: Participation.

This student's needs are best described by the following group -

❑ **Group 1**	• Is at risk from some hazards in the environment as a direct result of the student's disability. • Does not understand boundaries and may wander into other parts of the school requiring particular playground monitoring programs. • Is at risk of injuring self or others at particular times during the school day requiring some supervision. • Cannot hear, understand or comply with verbal warnings and requires some additional supervision to maintain safety.
❑ **Group 2**	• Absconds regularly and requires extra supervision by staff during recess and lunch times. • Is at risk of injuring self or others requiring a moderate level of supervision during the school day.
❑ **Group 3**	• Is at high risk from environmental hazards requiring significant levels of supervision at regular times during the school day. • Will abscond and requires significant supervision by staff throughout the school day. • Requires specially designed programs in order to develop appropriate play and social interactions and to better understand the possible consequences of inappropriate social contact. • Requires significant supervision as the student is at risk of injuring self.
❑ **Group 4**	• Is at high risk from environmental hazards and requires constant supervision. • Requires constant supervision to prevent injury to self or others.

❑ **This area is not applicable**

PARTICIPATION

PARTICIPATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

This area focuses on the way students interact with those around them and the support they need to manage relationships with others. It includes descriptions of the support needed to participate in classroom and school routines effectively.

This student's needs are best described by the following group -

❑ **Group 1**	• Has difficulty in forming and maintaining relationships, developing friendships and/or being included in playground activities, requiring a focus on this issue in class programs and the ILP. • The student has some difficulty with the dynamics of relationships and does not respond appropriately in social situations requiring social skills programs in the classroom. • Requires strategies to ensure appropriate reactions when dealing with other students or teachers. • Needs prompting to cope with daily routines eg times for various school activities, transportation requirements.
❑ **Group 2**	• Has difficulties organising daily routines, tasks and materials without significant support. • Has some awareness of the demands, expectations and restrictions of the school and wider community but requires significant support. • Individualised instruction needed to assist student to develop and maintain appropriate friendships and relationships. • Requires considerable support in unfamiliar situations. • Significant preparation is needed to enable the student to understand new situations. • Requires a personal development program designed with input from school personnel, parents/carers and other key people.
❑ **Group 3**	• The student experiences extremely poor attention or is very withdrawn and requires a specific program developed by the school, the student's parents/carers and other key people. • Is dependent on an adult to interpret demands, expectations and restrictions of the school environment and the wider community. • Requires continual monitoring from an adult in less structured situations to encourage participation. • Requires ongoing and explicit instruction in order to develop appropriate responses to social situations and interactions.
❑ **Group 4**	• Requires intensive and ongoing supervision in all activities to enable participation and successful interaction with others. • Requires delivery of an intensive and individualised social development program, with high levels of support in order to manage interactions with peers and adults. • Additional and intensive supervision is required at all times of the day due to unpredictable or socially provocative tendencies.

❑ **This area is not applicable**

PARTICIPATION

CURRICULUM PARTICIPATION

This area indicates support needed to participate in a meaningful learning program. It details the degree of curriculum adaptation the teacher must provide for learning to occur.

This student's needs are best described by the following group -

❑ **Group 1**	- Attempts structured tasks in all curriculum areas but has difficulty with concentration and completion. - Can learn new skills and concepts with repeated individual instruction. - The curriculum needs to be adapted in some specific areas. - Requires a range of assessment practices to demonstrate learning outcomes. - Needs close supervision to remain on task.
❑ **Group 2**	- Can undertake learning activities in all areas if presented in small steps, but some support is needed to stay on task. - Writing is more difficult for the student than for age-peers and some adaptations to the curriculum are required. - Can acquire new skills after repeated individual instruction, with significant curriculum adaptations.
❑ **Group 3**	- Copes with structured tasks in very small steps for a limited time with constant assistance. - Requires modification and direct assistance due to significantly delayed fine motor skills. - May acquire new skills after intensive individual instruction, but has difficulty retaining them. - Simple verbal instructions, concrete demonstrations and initial 'hand over hand' assistance are required to support learning. - Significant support and individualised strategies or materials are needed to ensure engagement in most curriculum areas. - A high level of adaptation to the curriculum and program delivery within a highly structured classroom environment is needed. - Individually tailored assessment practices are needed to demonstrate learning outcomes.
❑ **Group 4**	- Total support and hands on assistance is required for basic sensory and cognitive stimulation. - Requires high level adaptations in all areas of the curriculum and intensive support to enable participation in class activities. - Requires constant adult intervention and highly individualised strategies to participate in the learning program and to demonstrate learning outcomes.

❑ **This area is not applicable**

PARTICIPATION

COMMUNICATION

This area builds on information previously given in Part A: Communication. It focuses on specific language/communication development of the student, and the level and type of programs needed.

This student's needs are best described by the following group -

❏ **Group 1**	• Has a program developed with input from a Speech Pathologist or Itinerant Teacher to reinforce and practise some communication skills; verbal or augmented, receptive or expressive or pragmatic skills. • Some teaching of vocabulary and speech patterns is needed to develop appropriate use of language. • Requires prompts to maintain a reciprocal conversation.
❏ **Group 2**	• Has an individualised program developed with input from a Speech Pathologist or Itinerant Teacher to develop communication skills: verbal or augmented, receptive or expressive and pragmatic understandings. • Ongoing training and support is needed in the use of a communication system to supplement spoken language eg, picture symbols, signing. • Explicit teaching and modelling is needed to develop basic speech and/or language structures and support the meaningful use of language.
❏ **Group 3**	• A highly intensive and individualised program designed with input from a Speech Pathologist or Itinerant Teacher is needed to promote communication with other students, to communicate needs and choices and to allow participation in learning. • Requires ongoing training and support in the use of another communication method due to limited spoken language.
❏ **Group 4**	• Communication occurs using an alternative communication method and the student requires intensive and ongoing training and support in its use. • Unable to understand the pragmatics of communication and requires intensive support to interpret instruction and communicate effectively in the school situation. • Highly intensive, individualised and long-term instruction with input from a speech pathologist or itinerant teacher is needed for the student to acquire the basic communication skills required to participate in their learning program.

❏ **This area is not applicable**

PARTICIPATION

BEHAVIOURS

This area focuses on the behaviours students may engage in that result in a need for additional support. It refers to overt behaviours except where specifically mentioning withdrawn behaviour.

This student's needs are best described by the following group -

❑ **Group 1**	• Specific correction is required because the student sometimes displays inappropriate or immature social behaviours. • Has obsessions or compulsions which require support to ensure that the student is included in the activities and life of the school community. • Needs assistance to deal with conflict appropriately. • Requires some support due to behaviour needs.
❑ **Group 2**	• Has a behaviour management program developed by a school counsellor, specialist teacher or other professional to address episodes of anti-social behaviour such as self-stimulation, non-compliance or aggression. • A very structured class environment is needed to assist the student to display appropriate behaviour. • Requires regular intervention and separation from others due to behaviour needs. • Is withdrawn and requires ongoing intervention to participate effectively. • Occasionally engages in anti-social behaviour eg, self-stimulation, non-compliance, aggression.
❑ **Group 3**	• Requires a highly structured behaviour management program developed by a team of school and other professionals delivered within a highly structured school environment to develop and maintain appropriate behaviour. • Highly individualised strategies are required to manage repetitive or unpredictable behaviours, or atypical interests in objects, that impede learning or participation in activities at school. • Significant support is required to limit behaviours that are extremely disruptive to their own learning environment, and that of others. • Frequently engages in anti-social behaviour eg, self-stimulation, non-compliance, aggression.
❑ **Group 4**	• Constant support is needed due to extreme levels of aggressive behaviour. • Frequently displays behaviours that are both socially unacceptable and distressing to others, requiring significant support and modifications to class routines. • Behaviours require ongoing support from external agencies such as juvenile justice, disability support agencies or medical support. • Intensive and constant supervision and support from an adult in a highly structured educational environment is needed to allow participation in the school program due to extreme withdrawal.

❑ **This area is not applicable**

PARTICIPATION
LITERACY AND NUMERACY

This area focuses specifically on the student's learning in literacy and numeracy. Remember to use as a guide the skills that the student's age-peers are acquiring when discussing the level of support needed to achieve outcomes in this area. In this section, record the area of greatest need.

This student's needs are best described by the following group -

❏ **Group 1**	• The student's ILP outlines adjustments to literacy and/or numeracy curriculum content or format to enable achievement within the range of peers. • Requires a range of assessment practices to demonstrate learning outcomes.
❏ **Group 2**	• Can undertake some structured literacy and numeracy tasks independently when presented in small steps. • Requires simple verbal instructions and concrete demonstrations to participate in literacy and numeracy activities. • Acquires literacy and numeracy skills after repeated individual or small group instruction. • Is developing literacy and/or numeracy skills after repeated instruction but is well below benchmark for age.
❏ **Group 3**	• The student's ILP details significant adaptations to literacy and numeracy programs. • Can undertake individually adapted literacy and numeracy tasks when presented in small steps with assistance. • May acquire new skills after repeated and continual instruction on an individual basis.
❏ **Group 4**	• The student requires intensive and constant support to achieve outcomes in the areas of literacy and numeracy. • Has total reliance on key people for all literacy and numeracy activities.

❏ **This area is not applicable**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION