VICTORIA State Government | Department of Education



Thriving Kids stakeholder toolkit

October 2026

What is Thriving Kids?

- Thriving Kids is a new system of disability supports being implemented in stages from October 2026, for children aged 8 and under with developmental delay or autism with low to moderate support needs, and their families.
- Thriving Kids will be rolled out progressively, with all supports and services available across Victoria by January 2028.
- Thriving Kids will help some families get support and advice without needing a diagnosis or applying to the NDIS.
- The Commonwealth and Victorian governments fund Thriving Kids.
- This stakeholder toolkit includes information and resources for you to share with your audiences including:
  - Thriving Kids webpage, which will continue to be updated: Thriving Kids Victoria | vic.gov.au
  - content for your newsletters or websites
  - social media tiles along with suggested copy.

Supports available from October 2026

Thriving Kids supports will be introduced over time. The first supports, available from October 2026 include:

- **practical information, guidance and navigation support** through ACD – Advocating for Children with Disability Support Line via 03 9880 7000 or 1800 654 013 (regional)
- **more publicly funded autism assessments** for children aged eight and under, focused on families that might need additional support
- **more places in the Strengthening Parent Support Program** to help parents build skills, confidence and foster relationships – for example through peer support groups, information sessions and tailored advice
- strengthening **inclusion capability and capacity in kindergartens** through expanded training to help staff identify and work with other professionals and families to respond effectively to developmental concerns for children, including referral to Thriving Kids

More supports as outlined below will roll out over the coming months.

More supports available from January 2027

- From 2027, Victoria will also deliver a range of targeted allied health and other support services through Thriving Kids as part of the staged roll out.
- The first 6 sites offering allied health supports and developmental checks will be located at Bendigo, Hobsons Bay, Hume, Loddon, Maribyrnong and Melton. They will open from January 2027.
- This time-limited allied health support will be available to some children to help them build everyday skills and independence.
- Starting in the initial delivery sites, Victorian families will also have access to two new developmental checks – one as each child starts kinder and one as they start school.
- Developmental checks will be undertaken by allied health professionals and trained clinicians, and mean children and families can be connected with the right supports sooner – so kids are set up for success at kinder and school.
- More information about the roll out of allied health supports will be available soon.

Key messages for families

- Thriving Kids is for children aged 8 and under with developmental delay or autism with low to moderate support needs, and their families.
- Find out about Thriving Kids supports available from October 2026 and January 2027 on the website: Thriving Kids Victoria | vic.gov.au. More information on Thriving Kids supports and services will be available over time.
- Children will not need a diagnosis to receive support through Thriving Kids.
- There will be no changes to how children with developmental delay and autism access the NDIS until 1 January 2028.
- If you have any concerns about the development of your child, you should always seek the help of professionals and follow their advice.
- Speak with your Maternal and Child Health nurse by calling the MCH Line on 13 22 29 or your general practitioner.
- For practical information, guidance and navigation support, contact ACD – Advocating for Children with Disability Support Line via 03 9880 7000 or 1800 654 013 (regional)
- We are working with First Nations communities to make sure that Thriving Kids services and supports are culturally safe.
- We are engaging with multicultural organisations and listening to the experiences and perspectives of culturally and linguistically diverse families.
- We will use this feedback to design services and supports to meet the needs of all children.

Key messages for professionals who work with children

- Thriving Kids aims to build capacity and supports around children and families so that children with developmental delay or autism get the support they need to thrive.
- Thriving Kids supports are rolling out in stages from October 2026, with all supports and services available across Victoria by 2028.
- From 2027, Victoria will deliver a range of targeted allied health and other support services as part of the staged roll out.
- The first 6 sites offering allied health supports and developmental checks will be located at Bendigo, Hobsons Bay, Hume, Loddon, Maribyrnong and Melton.
- There will be no changes to how children with developmental delay and autism access the NDIS until 1 January 2028.
- There are many professionals who play an important role in a family's network. These professionals can help recognise developmental delay or autism and connect families and children to appropriate support.
- Visit Thriving Kids Victoria | vic.gov.au for more information. This page will be updated as services and supports roll out to help professionals understand what Thriving Kids is and how to guide families.
- We will continue to work with professional groups and representative organisations to determine how best to work together to build and deliver Thriving Kids in Victoria.
- For messages to share with families, refer to Slide 5: Key messages for families.

Key messages for allied health, community providers and maternal child health

- Thriving Kids supports are being implemented in stages from October 2026. Some supports are available now.
- Victoria will also deliver a range of targeted allied health and other support services through Thriving Kids from 2027 as part of a staged roll out. The first 6 sites offering allied health supports and developmental checks will be located at Bendigo, Hobsons Bay, Hume, Loddon, Maribyrnong and Melton. They will open from January 2027.
- These time-limited allied health supports will help children build everyday skills and independence. They will also help families understand how to best support their child's development with professional and peer supports. If, and how often a child receives allied health support and for how long will depend on their needs.
- Victoria is taking a state-led and coordinated approach to delivering these supports, with the Department of Education leading the delivery of targeted supports and development checks, as well as managing triaging and intake.
- In some cases, delivery of targeted allied health will be supported by community partner organisations where this best meets the needs of the community.

Key messages for allied health, community providers and maternal child health (continued)

- Developmental checks will be undertaken by allied health professionals and trained clinicians, and mean children and families can be connected with the right supports sooner – so kids are set up for success at kinder and school.
- Maternal and Child Health nurses will continue to help support children and families by:
  - noticing concerns, including through the key ages and stages visits
  - connecting families to support
  - making referrals.
- For messages to share with families, refer to Slide 5: Key messages for families.

Key messages for schools

- There are existing disability and inclusion supports in schools, including those provided through Student Support Services (SSS). These programs will continue to ensure students with disability can participate in education on the same basis as their peers without a disability.
- Schools will not be responsible for delivering Thriving Kids supports.
- Schools may support children and families by:
  - identifying developmental concerns
  - providing families with information about available supports
  - helping families connect with appropriate supports.
- As Thriving Kids expands, additional supports for some children and families will become available.
- The department will provide schools and school sectors with further guidance about how schools may engage with Thriving Kids as these supports are introduced.
- Visit Thriving Kids Victoria | vic.gov.au for more information.
- For messages to share with families, refer to Slide 5: Key messages for families.

Key messages for early childhood services

- There are existing programs that support inclusion in kindergarten services, including:
  - Kindergarten Inclusion Support
  - Preschool Field Officers
  - School Readiness Funding.
- These programs will continue to work with early childhood teachers, educators and other services including Thriving Kids, to ensure children and families can access timely and co-ordinated support.
- To support the implementation of Thriving Kids and connection with Thriving Kids services, online training on inclusion in early learning settings will be provided for early childhood educators from October 2026 through the Early Childhood Hub. More information on this training will be available soon.
- Early childhood education and care services will not be responsible for delivering Thriving Kids supports, but will continue to play an important role supporting children and families by:
  - identifying developmental concerns
  - providing families with information about available supports
  - helping families connect with appropriate supports.
- As Thriving Kids expands, additional supports for some children and families will become available.
- The department will provide early childhood education and care services with further guidance on how they can work with Thriving Kids as these supports are introduced.
- Visit Thriving Kids Victoria | vic.gov.au for more information.
- For messages to share with families, refer to Slide 5: Key messages for families.

Key messages for First Nations audiences

- The Victorian Government is committed to self-determination.
- We are working with First Nations communities to make sure that Thriving Kids services and supports are culturally safe.
- By recognising culture as a building block for healthy development, Thriving Kids will enable First Nations families to engage with and access services and supports.

Key messages for CALD audiences

- We are engaging with multicultural organisations and listening to the experiences and perspectives of culturally and linguistically diverse families.
- We will use this feedback to design services and supports to meet the needs of all children, including those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
- Translated material will be available on the Thriving Kids website soon.
- Visit Thriving Kids Victoria | vic.gov.au for more information. This page will be updated as services and supports roll out to help professionals understand what Thriving Kids is and how to guide families.

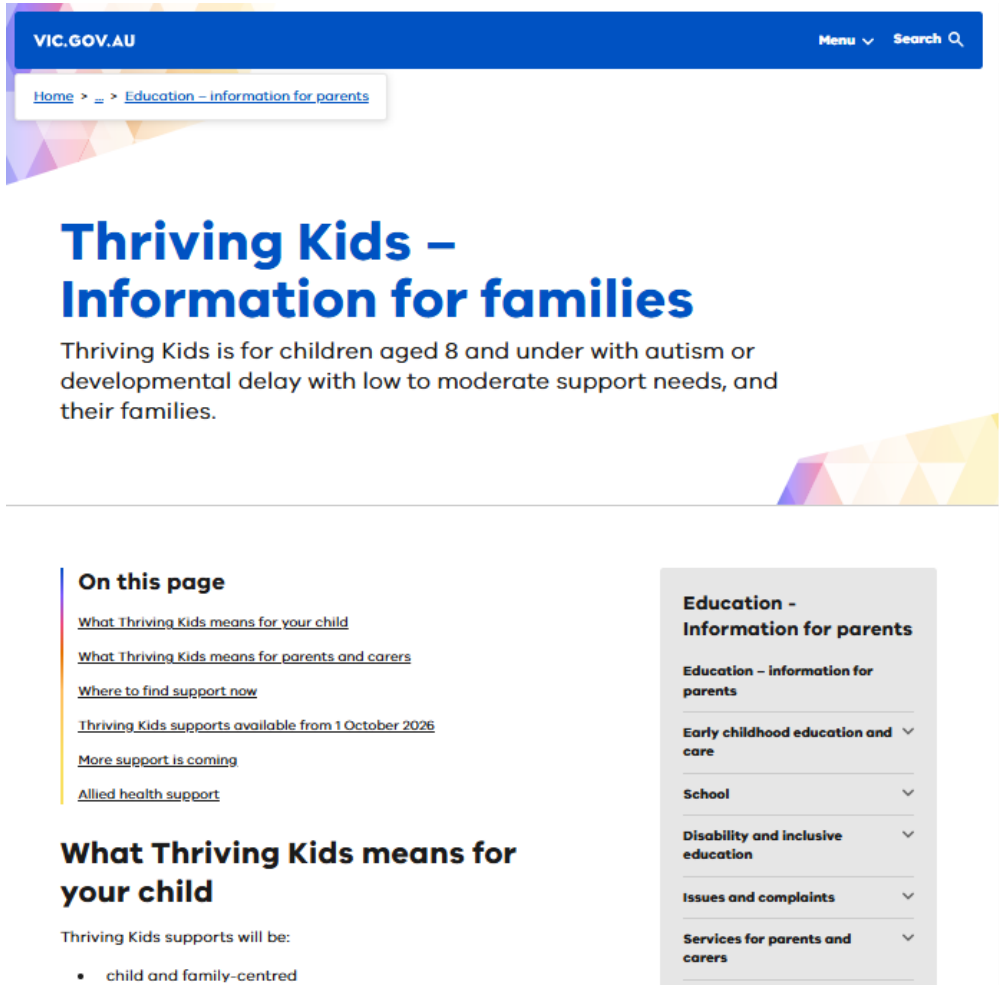
Thriving Kids web page

We've updated the Thriving Kids webpage to include:

- information on Thriving Kids supports and services available for families and carers
- information and guidance on Thriving Kids for early years professionals

Please promote the page among your networks:

- Visit www.vic.gov.au/thriving-kids
- Share the information in your corporate news or on your channels
- Link to it in your communications.
- Stay tuned! We will be adding more information in the coming months.



Newsletter copy

Share this text with your audiences to let families and the early childhood and allied health sectors know about Thriving Kids.

Heading: Thriving Kids supports available in Victoria

New Thriving Kids supports are rolling out, providing trusted advice and support to families of children with developmental delay or autism.

Thriving Kids is for children aged 8 and under with developmental delay and/or autism with low to moderate support needs, and their families.

Thriving Kids supports will be introduced over time. Some supports are available from 1 October, including:

- **practical information and guidance** to help families understand available supports
- **more publicly funded autism assessments** for children aged eight and under, focused on families that might need additional support
- more places in the **Strengthening Parent Support Program** to help parents build skills, confidence and foster relationships
- **expanded training** to help kindergarten staff identify and respond effectively to developmental concerns for children.

More supports will be introduced over time, including **two new developmental checks** for all children - one as children start kinder, and one before school. This will help ensure any developmental delay is picked up early, and that all children and families can get the support they need for success at kinder and at school. These checks will be undertaken by allied health professionals and trained clinicians.

Victoria will also deliver a **range of targeted allied health and other support services** through Thriving Kids from 2027 as part of a staged roll out. The first 6 sites will be located at Bendigo, Hobsons Bay, Hume, Loddon, Maribyrnong and Melton. They will open from January 2027. This time-limited allied health support will be available to some children to help them build everyday skills and independence. More information about the roll out of allied health supports will be available soon.

The full range of Thriving Kids services will be in place from 1 January 2028.

There will be no changes to how children with developmental delay and autism access the NDIS until 1 January 2028.

Visit vic.gov.au/thriving-kids for more information.

Social media

Please share information about Thriving Kids on your social media channels.

Assets

The next slides include sample copy and static assets.

Download social media tiles: Thriving Kids resources

Tag and follow us

Follow the Department of Education and tag us so we can ‘like’ your posts.

- DE LinkedIn
- X
- Early Childhood Victoria Instagram



Social media - Families and carers

Copy	Asset
Thriving Kids is a new support system for children aged 8 and under with developmental delay or autism, and their families. Some supports are available now and more will be introduced over time. Find out more: Thriving Kids Victoria | vic.gov.au	
Thriving Kids is a new system of support for children aged 8 and under with developmental delay or autism. It's starting to roll out across Victoria. Find out more: Thriving Kids Victoria | vic.gov.au	

Social media - Early Years/Allied Health/Schools

Copy	Asset
Thriving Kids is a new support system for kids aged 8 and under with developmental delay or autism, and their families. Some supports are available now and more will be introduced over time. Find out more: Thriving Kids Victoria | vic.gov.au	
Thriving Kids aims to build capacity and supports around children and families so that children with developmental delays get the support they need to thrive. Find out more: Thriving Kids Victoria | vic.gov.au	

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