

—★ personal
care
support
planning

in education and
children's services

Partnerships for health care and education

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Foreword

Young children routinely require assistance with daily living – or personal care support. Some students will require such support throughout their schooling; others will need support short-term following surgery or because of changes in their health condition. *Personal care support planning* provides advice about how to work collaboratively to maximise students' self management of their personal care, within safe and supportive environments for students and staff.

Personal care support planning was first published in 2001 to assist school and preschool staff to plan safe, reasonable and consistent personal care support for all children and students. It supplements the DECS guidelines: *Health support planning in education and children's services* (updated 2006).

This version contains updated information from therapists. The care plans have been removed and are now published electronically for ease of use on the *child health and education support services (chess)* website www.chess.sa.edu.au.

The 'how to' support guides have also been removed and are provided to staff at training programs. They are also available on the *chess* website.

We commend this booklet and the *chess* resources to all education and children's services workers as a comprehensive and practical guide to support safe and inclusive participation in programs, and hence quality of life, for children and students with health and personal care support needs.



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Acknowledgments

This book has been developed in consultation with a wide range of education, childcare and health professionals, families and communities. Their contribution is gratefully acknowledged.

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Disclaimer

The health-related information contained in this book was accurate and up to date at the time of publication. Readers are encouraged to check with their doctor or local health/community service provider for more recent information.

Further information

In South Australia, families and health professionals and community services can seek further information about health support planning from the manager of the service in which the child or student is enrolled or planning to enrol.

The Department of Education and Children's services has a wide range of education professionals who assist worksites to plan support for children and students with additional needs. These services can be contacted through district offices (see www.decs.sa.gov.au). General enquiries can be directed through the Department's toll free telephone number on 1800 088 158.

Copies of this book and related material, training programs and services can be accessed at www.chess.sa.edu.au. This site gives detailed information about the South Australian *child health and education support services (chess)*.

This icon indicates that the information can be accessed from the chess website:

www.chess.sa.edu.au



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Introduction

Personal care support is that daily living support usually provided by parents or guardians and which some children and students require either because of their young age, developmental delay, a medical condition, or other short or long-term circumstance.

Personal care support encompasses assistance with:

- personal hygiene (for example, hand washing, nose blowing and menstruation management)
- continence care
- eating and drinking
- transfers and positioning including the use of therapeutic equipment.

Personal care support needs can be:

- infrequent and situational (for example, a younger child might not make it to the toilet on time; another might need encouragement to eat when returning after an absence due to loss or bereavement). School, preschool and childcare staff have a duty of care obligation to provide assistance in these infrequent and situational circumstances
- for a short or limited time (for example, where a child or student is in plaster after traumatic injury or treatment or where a planned intervention is likely to be successful such as some toileting programs). Assistance in such situations will require a health support plan, and sometimes assistance from other services. The option of accessing education and care programs off-site may be considered if the child's or student's short-term support needs cannot reasonably be met
- long-term (for example, for a very young child, or where a child or student has complex support needs due to a medical condition such as incontinence or eating and drinking problems).

The need for personal care support should not exclude a child or student from a service. For very young children the provision of personal care support is part of routine childcare services. For older children, or children with individual needs, the service will need to develop an individual support plan. Safety of the child or student and of the workers must always be paramount.

The following pages describe issues and procedures for planning personal care support in education and childcare services. There is an emphasis on planning support for preschool children and school students with an individual support need. Guidelines for routine personal care support in child care are detailed in the publication *Staying healthy in childcare* (Commonwealth of Australia 2006) and is available from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) website: www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications.