

Children and Young People with Challenging Behaviours – the process for consideration of Equipment and Modification Services

The Ministry of Health would like to introduce Specialised Assessors to the new process for the consideration of high cost or complex housing modifications and equipment for children and young people who have challenging behaviours. This has been developed because of our concern that in many such applications, there is often limited or no evidence of how the child's wider behavioural issues will be addressed or that a multi-team approach has been taken.

Considerable consultation with representatives from Child Development Teams in DHBs and also representatives from NASCA and the EMS providers, Accessable and Enable New Zealand, has been undertaken during the development of this process.

The new process is attached for your information along with a question and answer sheet. This has also been circulated to NASC organisations and will be effective from **17 May 2010**.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this new process, please contact the Professional Advisors in Accessable or Enable New Zealand in the first instance. If your concerns remain, please contact either:

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is challenging behaviour?

“Severely challenging behaviour refers to behaviour of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in serious jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or delay access to and use of ordinary community facilities” (Emerson et al. 1987).

The Ministry purchases Behaviour Support to improve the quality of life for those people whose behaviour challenges their support networks, and/or places themselves or others at risk of harm, and to provide support for skill development to enable their participation in their communities. More detailed definitions are provided in the glossary of terms.

The NASC process on Page 2 suggests that if the child is not eligible for NASC co-ordination of services a lead agency for co-ordination needs to be identified. Who would we refer to?

The Ministry is aware that eligibility criteria are not standard across the country for all NASC. An example is eligibility for children with autism without intellectual disability. Child Health Services, Mental Health Services and/or Education Services are likely to be involved with the child and family. You could ask the family who is the key person or agency that supports them. The person making the referral needs to work with this agency to develop a joint response before requesting equipment and/or housing modifications as a strategy to manage a child or young person’s challenging behaviour.

Why do we have to implement a short term plan before submitting an application for equipment and/or modifications ?

Early intervention strategies can significantly improve outcomes for people with challenging behaviour. The Ministry needs to see that the child and family are provided with the most cost-effective resources and education to support the child in all environments. To achieve this, a team approach is required. For example; strategies such as parent education, respite options, and behaviour support, need to be considered before consideration of solutions based on restricting a child’s environment (‘containment’).

It is important to ensure all possible support options have been considered in a co-ordinated way before a referral to an Occupational Therapist is made to look at high cost or complex equipment and modifications.

Isn't there a risk that this process will make access to equipment and/or housing modifications for children and young people with challenging behaviour more difficult and take much longer?

The Ministry of Health hopes that this new process will inform people about the requirements before an application for Equipment and Modification Services is made. As a result there should be fewer delays in the process being held up by requests for further information from the EMS providers.

How do I contact a Specialised Assessor in my region?

Your local Needs Assessment Coordination Service will give you the contact for a Specialised Assessor in your region.

If you would like more information you can contact:

Accessable (if you live in the Auckland/Northland region):

www.accessable.co.nz, info@accessable.co.nz, Phone 0508 001 002, Fax 09 620 1702

Enable New Zealand (if you live south of the Auckland region):

www.disabilityfunding.co.nz, enable@enable.co.nz, Phone 0800 17 1981,

Fax 06 353 5876

We don't have a Behaviour Support service in my region, what other options do I have?

There may be local private clinical psychologists in the community or the school may have arranged educational psychologist input.

If there are no local Behaviour Support Services who can support the assessment process, please consider all of the people and services who provide support to the family/whanau and demonstrate how interagency discussion has determined that the decisions for the recommended application for equipment or housing modifications have been made.

Where would I refer the child or young person to who is not eligible for NASC support in my region?

NASC will be able to support you to make this decision.

How do I find out if the NASC in my region provides services for children and young people with challenging behaviour?

Please contact your local NASC.