

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) Building Blocks Hunter

Overview of Service

Building Blocks Early Intervention Program for children 0 to 6 years.

With over 25 years experience of delivering best practice intervention and services to children, their families and their communities, Aspect has been a pioneer in the development of early childhood intervention approaches specific to the needs of children with autism.

Aspect is at the forefront of providing high quality, innovative and reputable early intervention services with a strong emphasis on a model of evidenced based multidisciplinary early intervention services.

The program has a strong family centred approach where goals and outcomes are developed in close collaboration working on achieving results in key areas of family priority.

Building Blocks offer the following options:

- Home Based service
- Centre Based service – 2 hour session (5 sessions/term plus a home or preschool visit per term)
- Therapy service – 6 sessions per term (occupational therapy or speech pathology)
- Autism Pro – please see www.autismpro.com.au for further details

People we provide a service to:

Early intervention services are provided to children 0 – 6 years with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Families may live in Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Maitland, Port Stephens and Upper Hunter areas. Autism Spectrum Australia provides outreach and phone support to people who live immediately outside these areas.

Service details, operating hours and fees:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Address: | 358 Sandgate Road, Shortland 2307 (Centre Based service) |
| Postal: | PO Box 361, Forestville 2087 |
| Phone: | 8977 8341 |
| Fax: | 8977 8350 |
| Website: | www.autismspectrum.org.au |
| Contact Person: | Building Blocks |
| Hours: | Centre based groups – Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays Home based is flexible |
| Fees: | \$250.00 per term |
| Wheelchair Access: | Not available |
| Transport Options: | Services are accessible by public transport. Families may apply to the Department of Education and Training for transport assistance to get to and from the service |

Referral and entry process:

Anyone can refer to the early intervention service. Entry to the Building Blocks service requires an application form to be completed with current medical report attached. After a referral is received, an interview is arranged with the parents and child to determine a suitable Building Blocks service for the child. If the child meets the service's eligibility criteria then the child is placed on the waiting list for placement.

Role of the service:

The service's role is to work collaboratively with families to build on family strengths and capacity, and to ensure that developmental outcomes are generalised beyond the program setting. The service works on achieving results in key areas of family priority.

Aims of the service:

The aims of the early intervention service is to focus on developing social play skills and functional communication to prepare the child for successful integration in their next setting and generalisation of skills from one setting to another. This is achieved by focusing on the following:

- Motor skill development – fine and gross motor
- Communication – building functional communication and language development
- Pre-Academic
- Play – teaching joint attention, play and imitational skills
- Social/Emotional – teaching social interaction, relating skills and understanding of emotions
- Self Regulation – modulating sensory issues and positive behaviour support
- Advancing daily living skills
- Development of key pre-academic skills
- Generalisation of skills taught across environments
- Preparation

Philosophy of the service:

Our vision is overcoming the isolation of Autism. Our mission is to provide information, education and other services through partnerships with people with Autism Spectrum Disorders, their families and communities.

Services we provide:

Education in the form of regular workshops/training sessions; Integration Support; Transition Support; Speech Therapy Support and Occupational Therapy Support.

Some other important information about our service:

Approaches we use:

The early intervention programs use a variety of approaches including: group programs, consultation and parent education. The programs are centred on individual needs and as such consider the range of therapies in preparing the programs.

Locations we provide service:

Services are provided at the Hunter School for the centre based options and at the child's house for the home based options.

Staff in our service:

The Building Blocks team comprises of Special Educators, Teacher's Aides, Speech Pathologists and Occupational Therapists working as a multidisciplinary team.

Assessments we provide:

Each child is assessed using baseline assessment tools in Key Developmental Areas, Communication and Sensory Processing. Formal Occupational Therapy and Speech Pathology assessments are available. We work in collaboration with existing agencies to provide support for the family.

Resources we have available:

The service has a range of material available for families. This includes: general information handouts [free]; website www.autismspectrum.org.au, printed leaflets [free]; books [loan] and videos [loan].

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) Hunter School for Children with Autism

Overview of Service

Early Childhood/School Service: For children aged from 3 years 10 months. A 4 – 5 day program focused on developing children's skills in preparation for transitioning to their next educational setting.

Outreach Service: Providing information and consultation for individuals with an Autism Spectrum Disorder and those who care for/support them, in the home, preschool, school or other settings they require support. For further information regarding Outreach, contact the Hunter School on 4955 6266.

Training Service: There has been no official training program created at present. Customised training is available on request for schools and services.

People we provide a service to:

Early Childhood/School based programs are provided for children who have a confirmed diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Disorder/Asperger's Disorder/PDD-NOS.

Families may live in Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Maitland, Port Stephens and Upper Hunter area. Autism Spectrum Australia provides outreach and phone support to people who live immediately outside these areas.

Service details, operating hours and fees:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Address: | 358 Sandgate Road, Shortland 2307 |
| Postal: | As above |
| Phone: | 4955 6266 |
| Fax: | 4955 6270 |
| Website: | www.autismspectrum.org.au |
| Contact Person: | Principal, Coordinator, Counsellor or Secretary |
| Hours: | The Early Childhood/School Program operates Monday – Friday, 9am – 3pm during school terms at Shortland and in the satellite classes based at: Our Lady of Lourdes – Tarro, St. Kevin's – Cardiff, Holy Spirit – Abermain, Tighes Hill Public School, St. Francis Xavier - Belmont |
| Fees: | Details available by phoning the school |
| Wheelchair Access: | Not available |
| Transport Options: | Services are accessible by public transport. Families may apply to the Department of Education and Training for assistance to get to and from School |

Referral and entry process:

Entry in the Early Childhood/School based program requires an application form to be completed with current medical or psychologist report attached. We strongly recommend that parents contact the school to arrange a visit on a school day tour prior to application. During the tour the philosophy and practices of the school are explained as well as the application process.

Anyone can refer to Aspect, as long as there is parental approval.

After a referral is accepted an interview is arranged with the parents. This may take place at their home or at the child's current day setting. If the child meets the service's eligibility criteria then the child is placed on the waiting list for placement. If family requires an Early Childhood placement, i.e. 4 days per week, applications need to be made to the Autism Spectrum Australia Eligibility Committee. This application must be accompanied by a medical diagnosis report or psychometric assessment. This committee meets once per term.

There is often a waiting list for the Early Childhood/School Program. This list is prioritised according to the school's ability to place children with similar needs and the availability of alternate placements for the child.

Role of the service:

The Early Childhood/School Program works closely with parents and professionals to provide programs individually tailored to the needs of the child. Families are supported to identify most suitable future placement options after which a comprehensive transition program commences.

Aims of the service:

The aim of the Early Intervention/School is to support students to develop strategies to manage their Autism Spectrum needs in less specialised settings in the future. We also aim to provide intense training for parents and family members to develop support strategies and networks for the future.

Philosophy of the service:

Our vision is overcoming the isolation of Autism. Our mission is to provide information, education and other services through partnerships with people with Autism Spectrum Disorders, their families and communities.

Services we provide:

The school is able to provide the following services to children and families attending: Behaviour Support; Counselling; Early Childhood Programs; Family/Parent Education in the form of regular workshops/training sessions; Integration Support; Psychological Assessment; Transition Support; Speech Therapy Support and Occupational Therapy Support.

Some other important information about our service:

Approaches we use:

The Early Childhood/School programs use a variety of approaches including: group programs, consultation and parent education. The programs are centred on individual needs and as such consider the range of therapies in preparing the programs (i.e. Sensory Processing, Occupational and Speech Therapy).

Locations we provide service:

Services are provided at both the school and preschool/child care centres. Itinerant support is occasionally provided.

Staff in our service:

The Early Childhood/School programs have Special Educators, Teacher's Aides, a Family Counsellor and Speech and Occupational Therapist working as a multidisciplinary team.

Assessments we provide:

The school is able to provide educational and functional assessments for children. We work in collaboration with existing agencies to provide support for the family.

Resources we have available:

The service has a range of material available for families. This includes: general information handouts [free]; website www.autismspectrum.org.au, printed leaflets [free]; books [loan] and videos/dvd's [loan].

Early Links

Overview of Service

- Educational and Therapy Support for children and families
- Outreach Service to Early Childhood Centres

People we provide a service to:

Services are provided to families with children 3 to 6 years of age who have developmental needs or disabilities and are attending preschool or long day care centres in the Cessnock, Maitland, Dungog, Singleton, Muswellbrook and Scone Local Government Areas. The service supports children who present with needs in a number of developmental areas. This may include developmental delay, cognitive impairment, communication difficulties, perceptual difficulties, physical disabilities, self-help concerns, sensory processing issues, behavioural or emotional difficulties and difficulties related to social development, e.g. autism.

Service details, operating hours and fees:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Address: | 19 Galway Bay Drive, Ashtonfield 2323 |
| Postal: | As above |
| Phone: | 4934 3773 |
| Fax: | 4934 3703 |
| Contact Person: | Service Manager |
| Hours: | Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm |
| Fees: | There are no fees charged |
| Wheelchair Access: | The service is an itinerant program - staff go out into the community |
| Transport Options: | The service is an itinerant program - staff go out into the community |

Referral and entry process:

Anyone who is concerned about a child's development can refer a child to Early Links as long as they have parental permission. Referrals can be made by phone, fax or mail. Parents, early childhood staff or other professionals are required to complete a request for service form which details the areas of need for the child. These are available from the Early Links office and at most early childhood centres.

All new referrals are reviewed. At times it is necessary for families to be placed on a waiting list until a position within the services becomes available. At the initial interview the Early Links teacher meets with the parents and consults with the early childhood staff to assess the level of service needed for each child/family. This may include a developmental assessment, individual program and IFSP reviews.

Role of the service:

The role of the service is to work collaboratively with families and the early childhood centre staff to provide assessment and develop individual programs for children aged 3 – 6 years with developmental needs or disabilities.

Aims of the service:

The aim of the service is to facilitate the effective inclusion and individual development of children with developmental needs or disabilities. This is achieved by developmental assessment of children; the provision of information to families and early childhood centres to promote children's developmental needs; referral to other relevant services; coordination of Individual Family Service Plans; advocacy for families and assistance with the transition to school process.

Philosophy of the service:

All children have the right to be included as valued participants in early childhood services. Children with recognised disabilities or developmental needs have a right to access opportunities that promote their skill development, nurture their ability to function independently and supports them to interact with their peers.

Children's needs should be considered in the context of their family situation, as well as the demands of the mainstream setting. Early Links believes it is important that families are provided with information and support that strengthens their abilities to access services and to have their child's developmental needs met within the community environment. Early Links promotes inclusion by acting as a resource so that all early childhood staff can develop skills and knowledge in providing appropriate programs for each child and to support them to feel secure and valued members of the group.

Services we provide:

The service provides several types of support including:

- Assistance with individual programs
- Guidance for behaviour
- Parent/family support
- Consultation and support to early childhood centre staff
- Speech Therapy for high need children
- Occupational Therapy for high need children
- Access to Developmental Resources
- Transition support into other services and school

Some other important information about our service:

Approaches we use:

A collaborative approach to developing programs is employed through joint consultation with parents, early childhood centre staff, other professionals and the Early Links multidisciplinary team. Programs are implemented within the natural context of the early childhood centre.

Locations we provide service:

Services are provided in the early childhood centre the child attends.

Staff in our service:

The service is staffed by a service manager, itinerant early childhood support teachers, a part-time speech pathologist and part-time occupational therapist.

Assessments we provide:

The service is able to provide developmental, educational, functional, occupational therapy and language assessments. Speech and Occupational Therapy assessments are available for high need children only.

Resources we have available:

The service has a range of material available for families and early childhood centre staff. This includes: general information handouts [free]; printed leaflets and pamphlets [free]; books and videos [loan]; toys and equipment [loan].

Firstchance

Early Childhood Intervention Program

Special Education Centre, University of Newcastle

Overview of Service

- Firstchance Early Childhood Intervention Preschool Programs at the Special Education Centre, University of Newcastle. Also at venues in Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens and Raymond Terrace
- Baby/Toddler Programs at the Special Education Centre, University of Newcastle
- Early Childhood Intervention Outreach Consultancy Program
- Home based Program

People we provide a service to:

Services are provided to children 0 - 6 years of age who have an identified disability or are at risk of developmental delay living in the Newcastle, Port Stephens or Lake Macquarie areas. Wherever possible, families from other areas, who are not able to attend their local service, may be accepted.

Children may present with needs in any of the following developmental areas: behaviour, feeding, speech/language, communication, emotional, learning, motor skills, social, sensory. Children whose primary disability is physical or sensory are usually referred on to more specialised services. Priority is decided by looking at the strengths and the needs of the family and what support is already in place.

Service details, operating hours and fees:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Address: | Special Education Centre, University of Newcastle, Callaghan Tomaree Neighbourhood Centre, Salamander Bay Salvation Army Eastlakes Centre, Belmont Raymond Terrace Community Preschool, Raymond Terrace |
| Postal: | Special Education Centre, University of Newcastle, Callaghan 2308 |
| Phone: | 4921 6265 |
| Fax: | 4921 6939 |
| Contact Person: | Team Leader |
| Hours: | Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4pm |
| Fees: | \$15 for 2 hour playgroup session \$30 for full day preschool \$15 for home visits Equipment Levy: \$30 per year (payable as \$15 in February and \$15 in July) Firstchance (parent organisation) Membership Fee: \$10 per year Outreach Consultancy is free |
| Wheelchair Access: | There is wheelchair access to all facilities |
| Transport Options: | The service is accessible by local bus services. Transport via the centre bus may be available for families who have no other means of transport |

Referral and entry process:

Anyone can make a referral with permission from the child's parent/carer. Referrals can be made by phone, mail or in person. Reports are not necessary when making a referral, however copies of any relevant reports are helpful. After a referral is received, the child's name and details are placed on the waiting list. As soon as possible phone contact is made with the family and an appointment is arranged to meet with the family and conduct an informal observational assessment of the child. Placement is then offered when a place becomes available in an appropriate program. The service has a waiting list. Families with young babies are seen immediately and may be offered

a home based program while they wait for a place in the centre-based programs. Priority is determined by looking at the strengths and needs of the child and the family, and the amount and kind of services or support already in place for the family.

Role of the service:

This service is available to families of young children aged 0-6 years with disabilities who live in the Newcastle, Port Stephens or Lake Macquarie local government areas. Individual Educational Programs are provided for children who have a diagnosed disability, or who are seen to be at risk of developmental delay.

The Early Childhood Intervention Program provides a holistic approach to each child and family's needs. The strengths and needs of each child are determined by a Functional Play-Based Assessment which is conducted in collaboration with the parent/carer over a five week period. Information from this process as well as discussions with other relevant professionals and carers (e.g. child care, preschool) forms the basis of an Individual Family Service Plan which incorporates the Individual Educational Program.

The Baby Program provides a 2 hour playgroup session for children from 0 -12 months. These families are able to access a weekly program at the centre or in their home. This group is staffed by a teacher, family worker, occupational therapist, speech pathologist and a support worker.

The Toddler Programs provide morning and afternoon sessions for small groups of 8 children and their families. Each session runs for two hours and is designed to address the individual needs of children within a group setting. Parents are involved in both the planning, implementation and evaluation of their child's program. These groups are staffed by 2 teachers and a support worker each week and either a speech pathologist or occupational therapist on a 2 weekly rotation. As part of this program, parents have access to workshops each week. These workshops are facilitated by a family worker based on areas of interest raised by families.

The Preschool programs provide full day sessions for children over the age of 3 years. Full day sessions are provided at the Special Education Centre, Belmont, Salamander Bay and Raymond Terrace. The children who attend these sessions also usually attend a regular preschool. The program also supports these children with the Transition to School process for the following year. The centres are licensed by the Department of Community Services so parents are not required to remain on the premises. However, parents are welcome to stay if they wish to do so. Parents are involved in the planning and evaluation of their child's program.

The Home based Program provides services to families who have difficulty accessing a centre-based program due to distance, family circumstances, transport or the nature of the child's disability. This program involves an early childhood intervention teacher visiting the family at their home on a weekly or fortnightly basis. Therapist and family worker support is available as needed.

The Early Childhood Intervention Outreach Program provides consultancy support to preschools and child care centres that require assistance with the inclusion of any child with additional needs.

Aims of the service:

The Early Childhood Intervention Program aims to prepare the child for the least restrictive environment.

Children are encouraged to use their existing skills and to develop new skills to reach their optimal potential. The program focuses on developing the child's skills in preparation for their future environment.

Philosophy of the service:

The Early Childhood Intervention Program is a family centred program.

We aim to provide an environment which acknowledges and respects the uniqueness of each family and the significance of their culture, customs, language, beliefs and the community context in which it operates.

Families are recognised as the most important influence in the life and development of a child and are supported and encouraged to take a leading role in any case conferences or team meetings regarding their child.

Families and staff members work in collaboration to develop and evaluate individual programs which cater for the specific needs of the child. With consent/invitation from the child's parents/carers, input from others involved in the care and development of the child is also welcome to be part of the process of developing the child's individual program. The needs of the child are looked at in terms of the whole child within the environment of the family and the wider community.

Services we provide:

The Early Childhood Intervention Program provides:
Baby/Toddler Playgroups
Preschool programs
Home based programs
Support for families from the Aboriginal community
Outreach consultancy
Functional Play-Based Assessments
Opportunities for formal developmental assessments
Professional development
Opportunities for parent education
Parent support programs/Parent support groups
Transition to school programs

Some other important information about our service:

Approaches we use:

The program uses a variety of approaches including group programs, home programs, parent education, preschool program and consultation. Individual "one to one" sessions with children are provided if needed.

Locations we provide service:

Services are provided in a range of locations including the Centres and at families' homes.

Staff in our service:

The service has a range of staff including: several Special Education Teachers, Early Childhood Educators, qualified Child Care Workers, aides and volunteers. The program also has Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists, Family Workers and access to a Medical Officer/Psychologist.

Assessments we provide:

The service is able to provide educational, functional and speech pathology assessments. Where required, formal assessments are also provided by the visiting Medical Officer/Psychologist.

Resources we have available:

The service has a range of general information handouts, leaflets and pamphlets available free of charge to families. It also has books, videos, audio material, toys and equipment available for loan to families.

Hunter Prelude Early Intervention Centre

Overview of Service

Special Education and Therapy program for Infants and Children

People we provide a service to:

Services are provided to children 0 - 5 years of age who have, or are at risk of developing, a developmental delay or disability. Families must live in the Hunter Valley including: Cessnock, Maitland, Murrurundi, Scone, Dungog, Merriwa, Muswellbrook and Singleton. Priority is shown to children under two years of age. The program caters for children with needs in any of the following areas: physical disability, sensory disability [hearing or vision] intellectual/developmental delay, or difficulties relating to behaviour, social development [e.g. autism] emotional development, learning, communication, fine/gross motor skills, perception, genetic/birth defects, self-help or feeding.

Service details, operating hours and fees:

- Address:** 131 Northcote Street, Kurri Kurri 2327
Civic Avenue, Singleton 2330
- Postal:** Kurri Kurri - PO Box 191 Kurri Kurri 2327
Singleton - PO Box 3001 Singleton 2330
- Phone:** Kurri Kurri - 4937 4549
Singleton - 6571 4384
- Fax:** Kurri Kurri - 4937 5571
Singleton - 6572 4455
- Website:** www.hunterprelude.org.au
- Contact Person:** Kurri Kurri - Director
Singleton - Coordinator
- Hours:** Monday to Friday 9 am to 4 pm. Closed during school holidays but has an "on call" service available for emergencies
- Fees:** Prelude charges \$5 for individual sessions and \$5 for group sessions. However, fees are voluntary and tax deductible. Children with Autism who qualify for FaHCSIA funding are charged \$150 per session, this is fully claimed.
- Wheelchair Access:** There is wheelchair access to all facilities
- Transport Options:** The service is accessible via the local bus service. Prelude is unable to provide families with transport assistance to the centre

Referral and entry process:

Anyone can make a referral - including parents. Referrals may be made by phone, mail or in person. Reports are not necessary when making a referral. Once a referral is accepted an appointment is made to talk with the family [either at their home or at the centre]. During this visit the child is initially screened by the Director and a determination is made in regards to a position in the program.

The waiting list is prioritised according to the age of the children requiring services - preference is shown to children under two years of age.

Role of the service:

The service is fully focused on early intervention and provides developmental assessment, education and therapy to children 0 - 5 years with developmental delays and/or disabilities and their families. Physiotherapy, Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy is available as consultation only. There is no ongoing therapy at the centre.

Aims of the service:

Prelude aims to provide each family with services designed to meet their individual needs and personal goals.

Philosophy of the service:

The philosophy of Prelude is to ensure that each child with a disability receives a service which is designed to meet, in the least restrictive way, his/her individual needs and personal goals.

Services we provide:

Prelude provides a range of services including:

- Developmental playgroup
- Early intervention class
- Early intervention groups
- Individual teaching sessions
- Access to aides and equipment
- Parent/family education
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Speech pathology
- Integration support
- Transition support into early intervention, preschool and school

Some other important information about our service:

Approaches we use:

Prelude uses a variety of approaches when working with families. These include: one to one with children; parent education; home programs; group programs and consultation.

Locations we provide service:

Prelude provides services both at the centre and in families' homes.

Staff in our service:

Prelude has a multidisciplinary team including: four Special Education/Early Childhood Teachers, Child Care Workers, a Speech Pathologist, a Physiotherapist, a Occupational Therapist and Administrators.

Assessments we provide:

Prelude provides a range of assessment support including developmental; educational/functional, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and speech pathology assessments. Assessments are multidisciplinary within agency.

Resources we have available:

Prelude has a range of resource material available for families. This includes general information handouts [free].

RIDBC Hunter

Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children

Overview of Service

- Reverse Integration Preschool
- Early Learning Program
- Vision Education Advisory Service

People we provide a service to:

Preschool services are provided to children who have a sensory disability (vision and/or a hearing impairment) aged 2 years to school entry age. Community children enrolled as part of the Reverse Integration Model are accepted from 3 years to school entry age.

Service details, operating hours and fees:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Address: | 160 Floraville Road, Floraville 2280. |
| Postal: | As above. |
| Phone: | 4942 8455 |
| Fax: | 4942 8457 |
| Website: | www.ridbc.org.au |
| Contact Person: | Director |
| Hours: | Monday to Friday, 9am to 3pm |
| Fees: | The Preschool program for children aged two years to school age with sensory disabilities costs \$8 per day, for community children aged three years to school age the cost is \$35 per day The Early Learning Program is free of charge. Consultations and initial assessments are also free of charge |
| Wheelchair Access: | There is wheelchair access to all facilities |
| Transport Options: | The service is accessible via public transport. The centre is unable to provide families with transport assistance to the centre |

Referral and entry process:

Anyone can make an inquiry - including parents and other professionals. Referrals may be made by parents to the centre by phone, mail or in person. Referrals must be accompanied by a report. Children with a hearing impairment require a copy of their latest audiogram and ENT report. Children with a visual impairment require an Ophthalmologist report.

Once a referral is accepted the centre's Director meets with the family to collect relevant information and appropriate reports. This information is considered at the RIDBC's next monthly assessment committee meeting to determine the child's eligibility for service. Each child's application is individually assessed. Once families are eligible for assistance they will receive a placement as soon as possible.

Role of the service:

RIDBC Hunter provides innovative programs for children who have hearing and/or visual impairments as well as children from the local community. It is fully focused on early education and intervention with the Preschool and Early Learning Program.

Aims of the service:

RIDBC Hunter aims: to provide high quality, innovative education to children; to assist families in catering to the special needs of their child; and to commence the educational process as soon as a diagnosis of significant hearing or vision loss has been made.

Philosophy of the service:

It is the philosophy of the RIDBC Hunter that all children, irrespective of race, sex or social class, should receive the best possible education to enable them to reach their maximum potential. We believe this can be done by educating children in the least restrictive setting possible.

Services we provide:

The RIDBC Hunter provides:

- Reverse Integration Preschool: Children 2 years of age to school age with a diagnosed sensory impairment.
- Early Learning Program: Early education service for children with sensory disabilities.
- Vision Education Advisory Service: Assistance to families and teachers of children with a diagnosed vision loss who are attending other community services e.g. preschools.

Some other important information about our service:

Approaches we use:

RIDBC Hunter uses a variety of approaches including: parent education; preschool program; home and centre-based programs; group programs and consultation.

Locations we provide service:

RIDBC Hunter provides services at both the centre and in family homes.

Staff in our service:

The service has a multidisciplinary team including: Early Childhood Teachers; Special Educators; Teacher of Vision Impairment; Teacher of the Deaf and qualified Child Care Workers.

Families and staff also have access to the Institute's Resource Team - with team members visiting regularly. This team includes an: Orthoptist, Audiologist, Occupational Therapist and Psychologist.

Assessments we provide:

RIDBC Hunter has access to a "Resource Team" of specialists, based at North Rocks, who are involved in all assessments. These assessments include: hearing; vision; psychological; occupational therapy and speech pathology. Assessments are multidisciplinary within the agency.

Resources we have available:

The service has a range of resource material available for families. These include: general information handouts [free]; print leaflets and pamphlets [free]; books [loan]; and videos [loan].

St. Dominic's Centre for Hearing Impaired Children

Overview of Service

Early Intervention Program

People we provide a service to:

Services are provided to children 0 - 6 years of age with an established hearing loss/impairment. Children may have additional disabilities. Families may live anywhere in the Newcastle, Hunter, Lake Macquarie and Port Stephens regions.

Service details, operating hours and fees:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| Address: | 76 Havelock Street, Mayfield 2304 |
| Postal: | PO Box 269, Mayfield 2304 |
| Phone: | 4968 1295 |
| Fax: | 4968 0456 |
| Website: | www.mayfldsd.mn.catholic.edu.au |
| Contact Person: | Principal |
| Hours: | Monday to Friday, 8.20 am to 3.00 pm – during school terms only |
| Fees: | There is a fee of approximately \$100 per term Fees may be waived in certain circumstances |
| Wheelchair Access: | There is wheelchair access at the school |
| Transport Options: | The school is accessible via the local bus service Families may be assisted with transport through the Department of Education and Training Special Transport Service |

Referral and entry process:

Referrals are accepted from Australian Hearing Service, Educators, General Practitioners, Health Professionals, Medical Specialists and parents. Referrals may be made by phone, mail or in person and should be accompanied by an audiogram report from Australian Hearing Services. Additional reports are also appreciated if relevant e.g. Paediatrician, Psychologist, Speech Pathologist or Occupational Therapist.

After initial contact, the family is invited to visit the school and have an interview with the Principal or the Principal's delegate. Should the child meet the school's entry requirements the parents are invited to enrol their child. A program is offered to the child and suitable lesson times are worked out with the parents.

Role of the service:

The centre offers children from birth/diagnosis to age six a centre based program: a weekly individual session, a transition to school program and a structured playgroup. The centre also provides primary and secondary school programs for children with a hearing impairment.

Philosophy of the service:

In partnership with families, St. Dominic's strives to achieve excellence in provision of educational opportunities for students who are deaf and hearing impaired. We believe that children with hearing loss who develop listening and spoken language skills at an early age have infinite possibilities.

Services we provide:

St. Dominic's provides the following services:

- Early Intervention Program
- Weekly Playgroup
- Early Starters/transition to School
- Primary and High School Programs with mainstream settings
- Audition, Speech and Language Therapy

- Sensory Integration Program
- Family Support

Some other important information about our service:

Approaches we use:

Auditory-oral program.

Locations we provide service:

Services are provided at the school.

Staff in our service:

Specialist teaching staff and speech pathologist.

Assessments we provide:

The school is able to provide developmental assessment and speech pathology assessment.

Resources we have available:

The school has a range of resource material available for families. Including, general information handouts [free]; printed leaflets/pamphlets [free] and a limited number of books, videos and DVD's.

Stuart Centre, Children's Services Program

The Spastic Centre

Overview of Service

- Children's Services, therapy support program for children 0 - 18 years of age
- Outreach Service providing information and support to childcare settings and preschools

People we provide a service to:

Services are provided to children 0 - 18 years of age who have motor delay, cerebral palsy or a similar physical disability. Children with fine and gross motor skill difficulties or communication and feeding difficulties are considered a high priority. The service is available to families who live in Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Port Stephens, Cessnock, Maitland, Gloucester, Scone, Dungog, Muswellbrook and Singleton. Note: the limited availability of home visits does mean that families have to come to the Stuart Centre if they require full service.

Service details, operating hours and fees:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Address: | 61 Parklea Avenue, Croudace Bay 2280 |
| Postal: | PO Box 3038, Valentine 2280 |
| Phone: | 4979 4333 |
| Fax: | 4946 9852 |
| Website: | www.thespasticcentre.org.au |
| Contact Person: | Children's Services Program Manager |
| Hours: | Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm |
| Fees: | There are no fees - this is a free service |
| Wheelchair Access: | There is wheelchair access to all facilities |
| Transport Options: | There is limited access to the Stuart Centre via the local bus service. The Stuart Centre is unable to provide families with transport assistance |

Referral and entry process:

Referrals are made by the child's parents/family. Other agencies need to refer via the parents but are welcome to contact the service with any questions or requests for information. Referrals are made by phone, to the PATHWAYS intake service [Phone 1300 888 378]. Information is gained about family needs and a decision made as to whether the service is able to meet the needs of the client and their family.

Once intake is completed, an appropriate service team is allocated. The family is offered an initial appointment to discuss their needs and service options. A service plan is developed with the family.

Role of the service:

The Children's Services Program offers information, support, therapy and education programs. Parents are given practical ideas to assist their child in all areas of development, including play, mobility and daily routine activities. The service provides support to day care centres, preschools and schools.

Aims of the service:

Children's Services aim to respond to individual needs identified by families of children with disabilities through flexible, accessible services that support the inclusion of the child and family within the community.

Philosophy of the service:

The centre adopts a family-centred approach to meeting the needs of children and their families. Staff work closely with families to develop and implement an Individual Family Service Plan for each child. This approach recognises the dependence of children on their families and respects the right of families to be involved in deciding the type and level of program support they receive. The Centre respects the racial, ethnic and cultural diversity of families.

Services we provide:

The service provides:

- Developmental Playgroup (to meet specific client/family needs)
- Parent/Family Education (as part of therapy support for clients and families)
- Integration Support
- Transition Support into Preschool
- Transition Support into School
- Speech Pathology
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Access to Aids and Equipment Prescription
- Early Educator

Some other important information about our service:**Approaches we use:**

The Early Childhood component of Children's Services provides intervention through individual or small group programs - whichever is most suited to meeting the child's needs. The program emphasises parent involvement and educating parents in regard to management strategies.

Locations we provide service:

Most of the services offered by the Early Childhood component of Children's Services take place at the centre. Staff also make home visits, visits to preschools and childcare settings (to meet client goals).

Staff in our service:

Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists, Early Educator and Program Assistants.

Assessments we provide:

The service provides a range of assessment services including: developmental, gross and fine motor, language and speech assessment, as appropriate to meet specific client goals.

Resources we have available:

The service has a range of resource material available for families. This includes general information handouts [free]; printed leaflets and pamphlets [free], books [loan] and videos [loan].

Vision Australia

Overview of Service

Vision Australia provides training and resources for families to help children who are blind or have low vision to increase their choices and reach their full potential in life. Through our services we aim to facilitate each child's development, access to education and independence from birth to school leaving age. Our specialist staff work with children and their families to develop programs that are tailored to individual needs in a sensitive and timely manner – whether the child was born with low vision or their sight was affected later in life.

People we provide a service to:

Services are provided to children from birth onwards who have, or are suspected of having, low vision. Services are provided to families living in the Newcastle, Hunter and Central Coast areas. The Newcastle office is one of 10 centres throughout NSW.

Service details, operating hours and fees:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Address: | 7-9 Beaumont Street, Hamilton 2303 |
| Postal: | As above |
| Phone: | 4962 2803 |
| Fax: | 4962 5274 |
| Website: | www.visionaustralia.org |
| Contact Person: | Team Manager |
| Hours: | Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm |
| Fees: | Nil - support to clients is provided free of charge. |
| Wheelchair Access: | There is wheelchair access to the service |
| Transport Options: | Families can access the centre by bus or train. There is minimal car parking at the rear of the centre. Many services are provided in the client's home or community eg. Childcare, playgroup, etc. |

Referral and entry process:

Anyone can refer a child who has, or is suspected as having low vision as long as they have the parents consent. It is preferred that the child has seen an Ophthalmologist (Eye Specialist) before being referred. The referral contact number is **1300 847 466**.

Once a referral is accepted an initial appointment is made with the family to complete an initial assessment and establish their needs.

Role of the service:

Vision Australia supports families and children from birth offering advice on a range of aspects including vision development, self help skills (eg. dressing and feeding), movement skills (eg. crawling, walking), social interaction (eg. support and inclusion at childcare, playgroup) and overall child development.

Aims of the service:

Vision Australia is a living partnership between people who are blind, sighted or have low vision. We are united by our passion that in the future people who are blind or have low vision will have access to and fully participate in every part of life they choose. Vision Australia will achieve this through creating a community partnership of knowledge, skills and expertise to enrich the participation in life of people who are blind or have low vision and their families. We will ensure that the community recognises their capabilities and contributions.

Philosophy of the service:

Vision Australia is the leading provider of blindness and low vision services in Australia. We work in positive partnership with Australians who are blind or have low vision to help achieve the possibilities they choose in life.

Services we provide:

Vision Australia provides

- Variety of Assessments eg. vision, developmental, adaptive technology, lighting
- Advice and counselling
- Coffee Club for parents to meet other families of children who are blind or vision impaired
- Braille learning programs for children and their carers
- Advice about toys, books and equipment to suit each child's level of vision
- Assistance with inclusion into community leisure and peer groups, childcare centres and preschools
- "Felix" library

Some other important information about our service:

Approaches we use:

Services are provided on an individual basis as well as linking with other appropriate agencies.

Locations we provide service:

Services are provided at the centre, at client's homes and in the community.

Staff in our service:

The service has a range of staff including: Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Orthoptists, Adaptive Technology Consultants, Braille Trainers, Counsellors, Employment Consultants and Adaptive Technology Trainers.

Assessments we provide:

The service is able to provide vision, play-based developmental, lighting & adaptive technology assessments.

Resources we have available:

A large range of vision enhancement and vision substitution equipment to assist client's with many aspects of their daily lives.