

Provision of disability specific child seats and restraints for use in motor vehicles

On 1 May 2014 CAEATI and VOSS funding administration was transferred to MASS. The eligibility criteria, guidelines and policy remain under the guidance of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services (DCCSD).

On page 2 of the CAEATI guidelines it states: "If applicable Aids, Equipment and Assistive Technology subsidised by CAEATI must meet relevant Australian Standards or equivalent."

On page 7 of the VOSS guidelines it states that: "All vehicle modifications must comply with all applicable standards and regulations including Queensland Vehicle Standards and Safety Regulation 2010 and Vehicle Registration Regulation 2010. Where applicable, compliance with 'Australian Design Rules' and relevant Australian and New Zealand Standards is also mandatory."

The applicable standard for children's restraints and seating in motor vehicles is Australian/New Zealand Standard **AS/NZS 1754:2013 child restraint system for use in motor vehicles**. This requirement is legislated in Australia, and it is a legal requirement to comply. Commercially available car seats for children currently meet this requirement. However, at this time MASS is not aware of any disability specific car seats which have been tested to and passed this standard.

MASS acknowledges that there will be some people who require disability specific seating, where a compliant solution is not adequate (e.g. approved car seat or restraint). In these instances, MASS is complying with the process set out in **AS/NZS 4370:2013 Restraint of children with disabilities or medical conditions, in motor vehicles**. This outlines the following process:

- 1) If a compliant child restraint system is suitable then this should be used. The first step is to review options and try any that are appropriate. There are some very supportive seats which come in larger sizes for larger children and the suitability of these options must be considered first. *Please note any options which are clearly not suitable can be eliminated and do not need to be trialled.*
- 2) If there is not a suitable seat available which is compliant, then the second recommendation within the standard is to modify a compliant child restraint. This could include adding additional foam for support (please note that there are specific requirements in AS/NZS 4370:2013 regarding what is allowable when modifying existing car seats).
- 3) Consideration should also be given to products which can be fitted to the existing legal seat belt restraint for this to be suitable, e.g. can an additional harness be fitted which will appropriately support the client but where the main seatbelt continues to operate normally and remains the main safety restraint in use.
- 4) If it is not possible to modify a compliant child restraint, then purchase of a disability specific child seat can be considered.

When submitting an application for disability specific child seats and restraints for use in motor vehicles please submit the following information as part of the application:

- 1) The reason why compliant commercially available options are not suitable. Please note that if these options are suitable, they are outside the scope of the funding of the CAEATI or VOSS schemes and are the responsibility of the client, their family or carer to purchase.
- 2) The reason why modification to a compliant commercially available option is not suitable.
- 3) The specific reason the selected product is suitable e.g. features available as part of this product which are required to meet the seating needs of the client and are not available on a suitably sized compliant product.
- 4) If the only suitable option is a disability specific child seat, then MASS requires a **Medical Exemption Certificate issued by a health professional** to be attached to the application. A Medical Exemption Certificate is a legislated requirement of Queensland Transport and Main Roads. This certificate must be carried by the driver of the vehicle at all times.

Medical Exemption Certificate

AS/NZS 4370:2013 Restraint of children with disabilities or medical conditions, in motor vehicles, recommends when a disability specific child seat and restraint is in use that the medical exemption certificate issued by a health professional include the following information:

- Child, parent(s) and prescriber details
- Child's diagnosed condition
- States the reasons why a compliant commercially available child seat is not suitable
- Type of restraint prescribed and commercial name
- For modifications or customisation of a compliant or disability specific child seat and restraint:
 - Clinical justification for the recommended modification or customisation
 - Detailed description of the modification or customisation, including commercial name of any accessories (if applicable), and for modifications if it is reversible
- Date of issue and expiry date that is no more than 12 months after the date of issue
- Additional information for installation, use and maintenance of the seat and restraint. This may include in accordance with manufacturer's instructions, referral to an installer, or specify additional documentation required to legally use the restraint (e.g. medical exemption letter that must be carried by driver at all times)

If you are prescribing disability specific child seats or restraints, it is recommended you purchase the relevant standard: AS/NZS 4370:2013. This resource outlines options to consider for a range of situations including children with orthopaedic conditions, children with postural or movement disorders, children with complex and challenging behaviours, and children with medical conditions.

Should you require further information or clarification please feel free to contact one of the MASS Clinicians on (07) 3136 3524. If you have already submitted an application for a disability specific child seat and/or restraint for use in motor vehicles, please submit the above additional information to enable MASS to make a determination regarding clinical eligibility for this equipment.