



2026 Specific Education Needs Portfolio

September Report

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Specific Education Needs Update

Thriving Kids — current position

- **Thriving Kids commences on 1 October 2026**, with services being progressively introduced rather than becoming fully operational immediately. The Australian Government says all components are expected to be rolled out by **1 January 2028**.
- The program is intended to support children **under 9 with developmental delay and/or autism who have low to moderate support needs**, with support delivered increasingly through community and mainstream settings.
- Importantly for families, **there are no changes to NDIS access until 1 January 2028**. This creates a transition/overlap period while Thriving Kids services are established.
- The Commonwealth acknowledges that the rollout will be staged, with some supports commencing in October 2026 and others developing over time. Details about specific services and access arrangements are still being progressively released.
- Information and resources can be found at: [Thriving Kids Australia - Information Hub](#)

The new 3-year-old Healthy Kids Check

The **Medicare Healthy Kids Check for 3-year-old children** is scheduled to commence on 1 November 2026, subject to passage of legislation, and will be delivered by GPs.

The purpose is broader than a physical health check: it is intended to assess a child's health and development and allow the GP to identify developmental concerns and refer the child to appropriate supports, including Thriving Kids.

This is potentially a very important opportunity for rural and remote children. The 3-year-old check puts developmental surveillance directly into general practice and gives rural GPs an opportunity to identify concerns earlier, discuss appropriate management with parents, and connect families with available allied health and developmental supports.