



Eczema Support

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- Your Hands to Hold -

Supporting pupils with atopic eczema



*Guidance for speaking to your
school/early-learning centre about your
child's eczema needs:*



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Schools and Early-Learning Centres can often be challenging environments for a child with eczema. Classrooms are often hot and there may be things that could trigger an eczema flare. It can also be a long time without getting some cream/emollient on to protect and moisturise their skin.

You can speak to your child's school or early-learning centre about their eczema and put in place a plan to help (this can be formal or informal). There are many simple things schools/Early-Learning Centres can do to make sure your child is comfortable.

You can use the template My Eczema Support Needs Triggers to help prepare you for talking to your child's school/early-learning centre.

Our Eczema Care Plan here:

<https://www.eczemasupport.org.au/eczema-care-plan/> signed by your doctor, can also be used to assist your child gain healthcare support at the school/early-learning centre.

You can also get in touch with us and one of our team will help you through the process.



Key Tips

- Having a good relationship with your child's school/early-learning centre is important, especially if you are relying on them to find staff to help your child on a voluntary basis.
- Use the My Eczema Support Needs template to help you consider what you'd like the school/early-learning centre to do to support your child.
- Our Eczema Care Plan here - <https://www.eczemasupport.org.au/eczema-care-plan/> signed by your doctor, will assist your child gain healthcare support at the school/early-learning centre.
- Contact your child's school/early-learning centre to ask for a meeting to discuss your child's healthcare needs. You may want to use your completed My Eczema Support Needs document as a framework for the discussion so you are clear about what you are looking for them to do.
- Schools may not be aware of the impact eczema can have on your child's quality of life and ability to learn so you might have to educate them. You can give them our Tips and Information for your child's Teacher (school/early-learning centre) document to help.



What should you discuss with the school/early-learning centre:

It is important to give the school/early-learning centre some detail about your child's condition. This will help them understand the impact that eczema has on their ability to learn and have fun when they are in school/early-learning centre.

You may want to ask them to make small practical changes for your child if you know what triggers their eczema, or for them to help with their eczema treatment. Take some time to consider what would help your child when they are at school or early-learning centre.



If your child needs to take medication to school or early-learning centre, here are some things to consider:

- **What treatment** will your child need eg. Emollient/moisturiser, soap substitutes, anti-histamine?
- **How often** will your child need treatment within the school day?
- Will your **child manage their treatment or need help?**
- Will the school be able to provide a **private place** for your child to have their treatment (not the toilets)?
- Where will the **school store the treatment** or will they carry some/all themselves?
- How will the school **let you know** if they need more medication for your child?
- **Will you offer to go** into the school/early-learning centre to show the member of staff how to apply the treatment?
- If your child's treatment **routine changes** how will you inform the school?
- Ask for your school's or learning centres policy regarding medication administration.

You may find it useful to provide a letter from your child's healthcare professional (GP, Dermatologist or Dermatology Nurse) listing their current treatments or a copy of their treatment plan.

We have provided our Eczema Care Plan -

<https://www.eczemasupport.org.au/eczema-care-plan/>

for this purpose. Your healthcare professional may have their own preferred form or letter. That's OK too.



Minimise the impact of triggers

There can be many triggers in the school/early-learning centre environment so it's important to inform the school so you can find solutions. Triggers for your child's eczema might be different from another child with eczema and sometimes they can be difficult to work out. However, here are some common triggers:

- Your child's uniform may be uncomfortable eg. Wool blazers or synthetic trousers. Most schools will be open to children wearing clothing that is a similar colour to the school uniform but made in a material that doesn't irritate your child's skin.
- Messy play, particularly in early-learning centres and early years of primary may be a trigger. You could provide gloves, ask the teacher to limit the amount of time spent on these activities, or ask them to wash hands with soap substitute and apply emollient straight after playing.
- Sitting on the carpet can be a trigger for some children. You could provide a cushion for them to sit on, or ask that they sit on a chair if the dust or material of the carpet irritates their skin.
- Hand washing in schools/early-learning centres can be a trigger because of the soap and rough paper towels. You can ask to provide a soap substitute for your child to use.
- Schools can be hot and the heat can be a trigger. You can ask that your child sits away from heaters and near any ventilation, or they may be allowed to use a small fan or a water mist spray to help cool their skin.
- Sweat can be a trigger so running around at playtime or doing PE can trigger an eczema flare. You could provide a change of clothes, use a water mist spray or a cold face cloth or cool towel to cool the skin.
- In some regions all may be necessary

It's more than just itchy skin

For some children eczema can have a negative impact on how they feel about themselves. It's important that you communicate any worries or concerns you have about your child's wellbeing to the school so they can support your child in an appropriate way.

Things to watch out for are:



*Eczema can disrupt a child's learning
so it's important the school are aware how
eczema might impact your child*

- Tiredness caused by broken sleep is a big issue for some children with eczema. Scratching through the night can leave your child (and you) exhausted.
- Concentration levels at school can be impacted by tiredness.
- Children may be distracted by itchy skin when at school.
- Eczema can impact their behaviour – frustration, anger, itchiness, tiredness and self-consciousness can be overwhelming for a child and result in challenging behaviour.
- Extended absence from school due to infections, badly flared skin, or medical appointments may cause children to fall behind.
- Late arrivals in times of flare-ups may see children missing parts of lessons.



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We're here to help!

Eczema Support Australia can support you through the process of speaking to your child's school/early-learning centre. If you'd like to talk about what to put in your My Eczema Support Needs document please get in touch.

If, when you speak to the school/early-learning centre, you don't get the response you were hoping for, or your relationship with the school is difficult we can talk things through with you and see if we can help.

If your child is having a tough time at school because of their eczema we may be able to offer a school workshop to their class, or an education session to teachers.

Get in touch if you'd like to know more.

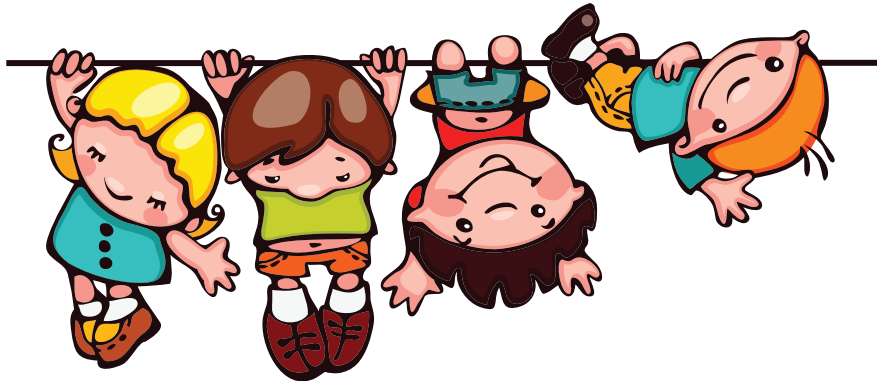




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To find out more please visit

 /EczemaSUPPORTAustralia  www.eczemaSUPPORT.org.au

Or contact us at

 contact@eczemaSUPPORT.org.au  1300 ECZEMA / 1300 329 362



With thanks to



For support & information



Reviewed by the
Australasian College of Dermatologists