

Australian-first website to improve road safety for children with disabilities and medical conditions

In an Australian-first, allied health professionals, organisations and parents can now access a 'one stop' national website of resources for the safe transportation of children with disabilities and medical conditions.

Mobility and Accessibility for Children in Australia Ltd (MACA) created macahub.org to address a concerning lack of access to information that leaves many vulnerable children and their families travelling unsafely on our roads.

MACA Chief Executive Helen Lindner said a recent survey of parents, health professionals and organisations undertaken with Curtin University revealed stark challenges relating to the transport of children with disabilities and medical conditions in motor vehicles.

This includes more than half of caregivers reporting that their child had gotten out of their child restraint or their seatbelt while they were driving, and more than two-thirds of caregivers reported never receiving information on safely transporting their child.

"No family should have to worry about their family's safety and well-being on any mode of transport. But a lack of accessible information until now has left many vulnerable children and their families travelling unsafely on our roads," Ms Lindner said.

"Our new website of national resources is the result of almost two years of research, advocacy, policy development and, importantly, the lived experience of families and the clinical perspective of allied health professionals.

"It provides trustworthy, independent and evidence-based information to ensure families, health professionals and organisations have the right information at the right time for good decision making."

MACA will also be launching online training for allied health professionals in the near future. You can register your interest in training at macahub.org.

"Allied health professionals reported low self-perceived confidence and knowledge in addressing the transport needs of children with disabilities and medical conditions in our recent survey, so we're focused on supporting them in their important prescribing role," Ms Lindner said.

MACA is a registered charity dedicated to advancing the rights of children with disabilities and medical conditions to safe and accessible transport. Its new website and research activities have been funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.

Until the establishment of MACA around two years ago, there was no national expert body advocating for the rights of children with disabilities and medical conditions to safe and accessible transport.

MACA addresses the gap in Australia between policy, research, and practice impacting the transport of children with disabilities and medical conditions.

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