



Leaders in
autism-specific
early intervention

Leading the field in early intervention

Established in 2005, AEIOU Foundation is the largest provider of full-time early intervention in Australia. It is a recognised leader in the field and its program is one of the most affordable and effective available in Australia.

It is Australia's largest employer of autism-specific therapists and educators, and its program is underpinned by evidence and research. Its full-time program of transdisciplinary therapy and care exceeds the Standards set out in the 2012 Australian Guidelines for Good Practice.

At AEIOU, children develop essential life skills, establishing independence, confidence and readiness for inclusion in school.



Leaders in advocacy and awareness

AEIOU is a voice for children and families and has forged strong relationships with governments, industry partners and the community.

It has established relationships within the Queensland Government and Australian Government and is:

- an essential funding partner of the world-first Autism Cooperative Research Centre
- a founding partner of Griffith University's Autism Centre of Excellence
- a founding member of the Australian Autism Alliance
- a founding partner of the Children's Early Intervention Network a member of the NDIS Transition Advisory Group
- a strong advocate for children and their families, particularly in relation to their applications for funding and supports
- in partnership with the Autism Hub, driving the direction of the Queensland Government's pilot-program to provide better transition support for children in schools.

AEIOU has a high profile within the community, engaging regular media interest and raising awareness of autism with successful community events (Take A Hike, Let's Get Awesome for Autism, Autism Awareness Month).

AEIOU has transformed Zac's life. He is now a very confident and capable boy and a keen learner. He approaches other children to play with him, with some assistance, and he has the skills to participate in our community, whereas before he really only looked from afar. Thank You AEIOU! – Katy Meilak

A focus on Research

AEIOU is committed to research and a dedicated research team focuses on implementing evidence-based practice and monitoring outcomes. It undertakes regular assessment to shape the AEIOU program, and contributes to national and international longitudinal research.

AEIOU engages with recognised independent researchers through the AEIOU Research and Innovation Committee, to facilitate sustainable research that has the potential to provide benefit to children with autism and their families and delivers its latest findings at national and international conferences, workshops, seminars and in publications

AEIOU is like a one-stop-shop, offering all of the therapy support we need in one location. Already, Henry is calmer, he is learning not to self-harm, he has more confidence and is starting to vocalise more words and sounds. He can dress and toilet himself and is increasingly aware of his surroundings, including people. – Cindy Walters



The AEIOU Story

Children with Autism can face lives with restricted opportunity. Cost studies estimate the lifetime cost of autism at around \$3.5million (Synergies Economic Consulting, 2014), with largest components related to cost of lifetime care and underemployment. It is estimated that effective early intervention can promote independence and social connection and that it has a cost saving of at least \$1.3m over a child's life span.

AEIOU's establishment was inspired by the experiences of Brisbane couple Dr James and Louise Morton, after their son was diagnosed with autism. Andrew's behaviour had changed; he would cry continuously and at times, his behaviour escalated to severe head banging. He did not try to attempt baby talk and was silent except for the word 'mum'.

Andrew was diagnosed with autistic disorder at the age of two, and Louise and James sought the best possible educational program to support his needs. They discovered a pilot program run by Education Queensland and experienced at first hand the benefits of early intervention in their son's and their family's lives. Within a short period of time of starting the program, Andrew's behaviour improved, and by learning to communicate with pictures, he became less frustrated.

Gone was the head banging and screaming if the family went out. Now he cried if they left without him. The Morton's could now begin to interact like other families. Within 18 months Andrew began to put sentences together, he learned the alphabet and could count to 20. He played with his siblings and loved parks, McDonald's and indoor playgrounds just like other children. Andrew started at a regular kindergarten and enjoyed the experience. To further his educational development, Andrew still required ongoing therapy from his early intervention team.

However, in 2003, the early intervention centre was closed. There was no other service of its kind offered anywhere in Queensland and as a result The Morton's were forced to continue Andrew's therapy in their own home. Dissatisfied with the fact that Andrew, and thousands of children like him, had no opportunity to attend an early intervention facility that was dedicated solely to children with autism and that the in home program denied Andrew that chance to grow and learn alongside other children, they decided to develop a service.

In November 2003, James and Louise, together with Andrew's therapist Rebecca Allen, developed the concept for AEIOU.

In February 2005, the first AEIOU centre was opened in Moorooka, Queensland. The centre was dedicated solely to an intensive early intervention learning program for children with an autism diagnosis.

Today, AEIOU operates from eight locations across Queensland and one in South Australia. It is managed by a Board of Directors and the program is delivered by a transdisciplinary team. The program is one of the best available in the country and enrolls more than 250 children each year.

Andrew is now in his late teens, and James and Louise Morton continue to advocate for change and better access to evidence-based early intervention. James Morton is the Chairman of AEIOU Foundation, and Louise Morton chairs the Lynn Wright Memorial Fund, which was established to provide financial assistance to families who may otherwise be unable to attend AEIOU Foundation's program.

"I write to express my strong support and endorsement of the proposal to establish an AEIOU Centre on the Minda campus at Brighton in Adelaide. ... The establishment of an AEIOU service on this site provides further opportunities for: employment, training; access to quality early intervention; reduction in long-term care needs, increasing potential for long-term employment of those that have been through the AEIOU program." Senator Nick Xenaphon, 16 July 2015



AEIOU – the Autism specialists

AEIOU enrolls children aged from 2 – 6 years, providing intensive, specialist support from highly skilled therapists who specialise in autism, from disciplines including:

- Speech and language pathology
- Behaviour therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Early childhood education

AEIOU employs Board Certified Behaviour Analysts to support the program's fidelity.

Families are able to participate in regular, free training and education to support their child's therapy and education goals in the home and community environments.

Children receive more than 20 hours of intensive intervention each week, and the setting provides a caring, naturalistic environment, where children are recognised as children first and foremost. Opportunities to foster a sense of fun, play and social skills are prioritised.

Children receive transition support when commencing a new enrolment at their next educational setting.

Delivering where it counts

Children at AEIOU are assessed upon intake, and at 12 month intervals to identify their needs, strengths and gains. Children receive intervention in small group settings, with individual support, with strategies designed to meet their specific needs and goals. At AEIOU, multiple professionals share the responsibility in evaluating, planning and implementing the supports each child needs to develop essential life skills, in the areas of self-help and independence, communication and behaviour.

Results at AEIOU

AEIOU Foundation changes the trajectory of children's lives.

More than **70%** of children transition to mainstream schools

90% of children develop functional communication skills

More than **90%** of children are toilet trained within the first term of their enrolment



Over the past two years, AEIOU has exceeded our expectations by far and has given Ivy opportunities we never thought would happen. Without fail, her speech and communication progress has been the biggest achievement to date. She can now count, sing songs, say her ABCs, ask for items, and the list goes on. Her vocabulary is changing and improving on a daily basis and it is surreal to watch.

AEIOU has also helped Ivy with toileting, brought out her cheeky and happy personality, taught her self-help and independence skills, cultivated a willingness to learn, developed increased attention to stick to a task, and helped her begin to understand emotions.

Ivy is a very determined personality and we are very optimistic for her future. She has an eagerness to learn and we are excited to say she will be heading off to mainstream school in 2018. We truly believe anything is possible and we credit AEIOU for helping Ivy in her journey – Casey Cornish

Timeline:

Jan 2005	First AEIOU centre opens Moorooka
Sep 2005	Tim Sharp and Ian Skippen commence as AEIOU's first ambassadors
Jun 2006	Lynn Wright Memorial Fund and Lynn's Lunch annual event launches
May 2007	Bray Park opens
Nov 2007	Toowoomba centre opens
Mar 2008	Townsville centre opens
2008	Park Ridge centre opens
Jan 2009	100 children in the program
2009	AEIOU's first Take A Hike! launched in Brisbane
Feb 2010	Purpose built centre in Nathan opens
Feb 2010	Development of Research Advisory Group (RAG) and start of AEIOU's program of research
Aug 2010	Rural and remote program commences in Wide Bay Region
Apr 2011	Lit Storey Bridge blue as part of Autism Awareness Month
Jul 2011	Sippy Downs centre opens
Jan 2012	Park Ridge (now Camira) centre opens
May 2012	Griffith University Autism Centre of Excellence – ACE – launch, an initiative founded with AEIOU Foundation
Aug 2012	Former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd leads the St Laurence's Walk-a-Thon

Aug 2013	Synergies Economic Consulting publishes Cost-benefit Analysis of Providing Early Intervention to Children with Autism. This gives AEIOU a national voice on the discussion of early intervention and autism
2013	Purpose built centre on Gold Coast opens
2013 & 2014	Chain Reaction corporate cycling challenge – raises funds to construct AEIOU Gold Coast
Oct 2013	Temple Grandin visit to AEIOU
2014	Manualisation of AEIOU's program developed and implementation commenced
Jun 2014	200 children in the program
2014	AEIOU – funding partner of the Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism Spectrum Disorders (Autism CRC). The world's first national, cooperative research effort focused on ASD (AEIOU a founding member since July 2012)
Oct 2014	AEIOU's first interstate centre opens in Adelaide
Jan 2015	Founder and Chair James Morton awarded the Order of Australia medal
Aug 2015	Founder and Chair James Morton awarded prestigious University of Queensland Alumni Award
Sep 2015	AEIOU Huntfield Heights expands

Dec 2015	AEIOU receives an NSRF Grant of \$1million for construction of a purpose-built centre in Adelaide
Feb 2016	Queensland Government supports bid for new centre in Logan
Jul 2016	AEIOU Townsville first Queensland centre to transition to NDIS
Oct 2016	Launch of AEIOU video series <i>Autism: The Early Years</i>
Oct 2016	Synergies Economic Consulting produces report <i>Providing Early intervention Children with Autism – Cost and funding implications of good practice</i>
May 2017	Chain Reaction Corporate Bike Challenge raised \$1,115,000, of which \$376,000 was donated to AEIOU. Chain Reaction has raised more than \$1m for AEIOU Foundation in total, and recently named AEIOU as a 2018 beneficiary
Nov 2017	Purpose built centre, AEIOU Brighton opens
Nov 2017	Construction commenced for AEIOU Logan Centre of Autism, in partnership with Griffith University. Made possible with capital funding from Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development, and Queensland Health
Nov 2017	Partnership with Autism Hub to establish new transition service for children with autism





Contact us

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