

Supporting children with an NDIS plan in early childhood education



Children have the right to access and participate in early childhood education and care (ECEC).

This information will assist you to support children with a disability who have an NDIS plan to fully participate in early childhood education.

Use these ideas to support conversations with families and carers.

Familiarise yourself with any cultural protocols that may be in place in your community and within individual families to inform communication of sensitive information.

A child with an NDIS plan attends our service

I want to ensure...

...we work with the family to meet their child's needs.

...our teachers and educators have the skills and resources to support inclusion.

...the child and family have a great start at the ECEC service.

...the child's ongoing inclusion is a success.

Australia's Disability Strategy
2021-2031

Creating an inclusive community together

www.dss.gov.au/supporting-children-in-ECEC

A child with an NDIS plan attends our service

I want to ensure...

...we work with the family to meet their child's needs.

- Offer a tour and complete necessary paperwork with the family as per your usual process.
- Ask the family to share any information that may help their child's inclusion. For example, their National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan, reports from their key worker or paediatrician.
- Inform the family that their child's key worker and other professionals working with their child are encouraged to visit and collaborate with teachers and educators.

...our teachers and educators have the skills and resources to support inclusion.

- Ask the family about their child's strengths, interests and support needs.
- Participate in meetings with the family and other professionals that make up the team around the child, to gather information and to share strategies.
- Ask the family about any specialised equipment, health supports and any reasonable adjustments to the environment or educational program their child may need.
- Consider if you need any further professional development.
- Speak to your educational leader about further supports which may be available in the early childhood education and care service or in the local community.
- Contact the relevant Inclusion Agency and ask them what support they can provide.
- See if your service has a Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP) and enact its inclusive practices if appropriate.
- Invite the members of the team around the child to observe the way the child interacts at key times of the day where they may need more support. For example, ask the key worker to share strategies at meal times, or parent and carers to help with transition at the start of the day.



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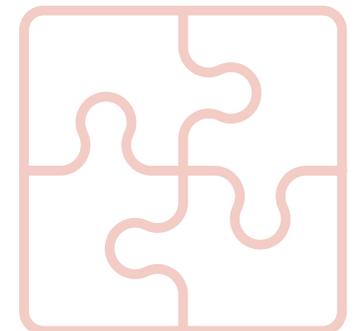


...the child and family have a great start at the ECEC service.

- Make the necessary adjustments in consultation with an Inclusion Professional (IP). For example, introduce visual supports, shorter group times, or specialised equipment like supported seating as required.
- Introduce strategies shared by the team around the child.
- Embed the child's NDIS and early intervention goals into their individual education plan.
- Establish any complex support practices by closely working with the child's support team. For example, if a child has dysphagia (swallowing difficulties), they may require a mealtime management plan.
- Ask the family and keyworker if the child's NDIS plan includes funding to support educators with training related to the child's individual needs. For example, specific meal-time requirements.
 - If not, talk to the keyworker about how the child's NDIS plan can support the child's needs at the service (above what can be considered a reasonable adjustment).

...the child's ongoing inclusion is a success.

- Check in with the family regularly to ensure the child's needs are being met and are supporting their NDIS and early intervention goals.
- Continue to seek support from the team around the child to make ongoing adjustments as required.
- Regularly collaborate and share information with the team around the child.
- Support the child's transitions to other rooms within the service, to pre-school or school.



Terminology and useful links

Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS)

An Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) is a primary health care service providing culturally responsive health care to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These may be community-controlled or a government run service.

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031

[Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031](#) is Australia's national disability policy framework. It is driving action at all levels of government to improve the lives of people with disability.

Developmental delay

When a child has [developmental delay](#), it means they might not develop at the same pace as other children of the same age. This means they may need lots of extra help to do everyday things. They might need this help for a long time.

Developmental concerns

When a child has developmental concerns, they might not develop at the same pace as other children of the same age. But they might not need as much help as children with developmental delay.

Children younger than 6 with developmental concerns may be best supported by an early childhood partner through early supports or other services including connection to a range of mainstream and community supports.

Disability

A disability is a lifelong physical, sensory, cognitive or psychosocial impairment that affects an individual's ability to participate in everyday activities.

Disability Gateway

The [Disability Gateway](#) has information and services to help people with disability, their family, friends and carers, to find the support they need in Australia.

Early childhood partners

[Early childhood partners](#) are local organisations funded by the NDIS to deliver the early childhood approach. Early childhood partners have teams of professionals with experience and clinical expertise in working with young children with development delay or disability and their families. The term early childhood partner may refer to either the partner organisation or the staff working within the organisation.

Inclusion Agencies (IA)

Inclusion Agencies work with services to identify and address any barriers to inclusion.

Inclusion Professionals

Inclusion Agencies employ skilled Inclusion Professionals who provide tailored support to eligible Early Childhood Education Centres to address inclusion barriers and develop their inclusion capacity and capability.

Inclusion Support Program (ISP)

This [program](#) provides support for eligible mainstream Early Childhood Education Centres services to build their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs, alongside their typically developing peers, so all children have genuine opportunities to access, participate and achieve positive learning outcomes.

Key Worker

A [key worker](#) is one key professional who becomes the primary point of contact for the family and works with them very closely to develop a strong, positive, ongoing relationship. The role of the key worker is to work directly with a family to plan and deliver services that promote learning opportunities within everyday routines or activities. The key worker calls in other team members when required so that a family has access to the other practitioners in the early intervention 'team', as needed.

Mainstream supports

[Mainstream supports](#) are also known as other government services. They include goods, services, supports and assistance available to the Australian population, for example, health, mental health, early childhood development, school education, justice, housing, child protection and family support, and employment services.

Strategic Inclusion Plan (SIP)

A [Strategic Inclusion Plan \(SIP\)](#) is a self-guided inclusion assessment and planning tool for Early Childhood and Child Care services accessing the ISP. The SIP includes short and long-term strategies for improving and embedding inclusive practice for the inclusion of children with additional needs alongside their typically developing peers.

Team around the child

A team around the child is where the family and professionals work together as a collaborative and integrated team, communicating and sharing information, knowledge and skills, with one team member nominated as a key worker and main person working with the family.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The [NDIS](#) is a national scheme that helps people with disability. This includes helping children with developmental delay, developmental concerns or disability through the early childhood approach.

The NDIS early childhood approach

The [early childhood approach](#) supports children younger than 6 with developmental delay and children younger than 9 with disability, and their families.

Children younger than 6 who do not fully meet the definition of developmental delay and have developmental concerns will also be supported through the early childhood approach.

Working Together Agreement

A [Working Together Agreement](#) aims to assist families, early childhood education and care educators and early childhood partners to work collaboratively.

**Australia's
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Strategy**
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