

Early connections can help you support your child's development regardless of whether they're eligible for the NDIS. They are funded by the NDIS and available when you have concerns about your child's development, or if your child has a disability. Early connections make sure you get the right supports and services to help with your child's individual needs.

Your early childhood partner will talk with you about the different ways you and your child can receive supports. This might include:

- Connections with mainstream and community services
- Connections to practical information that's relevant to your child's development
- Connections with other families
- Connections with early supports
- Connections to apply to the NDIS

Tell me more about mainstream and community services

Early childhood partners have strong community connections. They can help you and your child participate in mainstream or community services in your local area. Examples of the types of mainstream and community services that could be relevant to your child include:

- early childhood educational services, for example childcare, kindergarten or preschool, occasional care, family day care and playgroups
- schools
- health services, for example GP, paediatrician, child health nurses and vision and hearing services
- community health services for example dietetics, child mental health services
- family support service, for example parenting support groups and counselling services.

Your early childhood partner will be able to give you more information on the services available in your local area.

Tell me more about practical information

Depending on your child's individual support needs, your early childhood partner can give you practical information that is relevant to your situation.

This may include practical advice on typical child development topics, and helpful strategies you can include in your child's daily routine.

For more information speak to your early childhood partner.

Tell me more about connecting with other families

Early childhood partners will connect you to local support networks and services so you can meet other people with similar experiences or situations, if you want to.

These parent-to-parent and community based support systems can build your knowledge through shared experiences and help you navigate the road ahead.

They can give you the opportunity to talk about your family's experiences, and celebrate your child's uniqueness with others with a similar experience. It's a good way to build community with other families.

If you would like to connect with other families for peer support, speak to your early childhood partner.

Tell me more about early supports

Your early childhood partner may recommend early supports if your child is younger than 6 and has developmental concerns.

Developmental concern is a term used by the NDIA for a child who is younger than 6, to describe delay or delays in a child's development, below what is expected for their age, where they do not fully meet the developmental delay definition under the NDIS Act .

Early supports are designed to build capacity in you and your child to promote everyday learning. They promote everyday learning in your home and other environments.

Early supports provide a goal focussed approach to address specific concerns about your child's development.

To work out whether your child (who is younger than 6) would be offered a short period of early supports your early childhood partner will look at whether:

- their observations of your child, and your parent report, show concerns about your child's development
- the assessment and screening tools show your child's development is outside the typical range for their age
- there are developmental concerns that don't fully meet [developmental delay](#)

- there is any evidence from relevant professionals to show there's a significant impact on your child's function or the impact isn't yet known
- the support required is the responsibility of mainstream and community services.

Tell me more about applying to the NDIS

While you're being supported by your early childhood partner with early connections, you may decide that you want to apply to the NDIS on behalf of your child if they have a disability or are younger than 6 with a developmental delay.

To find out more about being eligible for the NDIS go to our [Applying to the NDIS guideline](#).

If you decide to apply to the NDIS on your child's behalf, speak to your early childhood partner, they can support you to put together information and evidence to help work out if your child is eligible.

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