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Response to NDIA paper ‘Supporting Children & Families’

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to your discussion paper on supporting children and families in the early years.

I am a registered music therapist and run a small private practice in Upper Ferntree Gully, Melbourne. I have read your paper and wish to make the following comments.

One of the most frustrating issues I’m facing with my clients is still a lack of awareness about the accessibility and benefits of music therapy for young children. I understand the NDIA and our professional association the Australian Music Therapy Association have done significant work in this area, but there is still much ignorance and hindering access from plan managers and other ECEI providers.

Regarding the quality of information of appropriate supports, I feel that music therapy is not well represented or explained to families. How regularly are ECEI partners employing music therapists, or referring music therapy to families outside of their organisation?

As a private practice music therapist it is currently cost prohibitive for me to register with the NDIA. While I welcome early childhood guidelines and best practice provider status, I feel that the current audit/registration process needs some refinement & equity before this will be attractive to many allied health practitioners in private practice.

Lastly, as an allied health practitioner I struggle with some planner’s insistence on allocating a single provider to work on a single goal with young clients. It has always been my belief (and practice) that young children benefit from a multi-prong approach whereby the whole allied health team are working collaboratively on the child’s goals. Isolating each goal to a single discipline is not usually an effective approach and I think encouraging collaborative work and communal goals would work so much better for our clients.

Thank you for offering this opportunity to comment and I wish you well with your review.

Regards,

Jacinta Calabro

Registered Music Therapist

TLC Music