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About the early childhood approach

Our nationally consistent early childhood approach is for children younger than 7 with a disability or a developmental delay, 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. The early childhood approach was developed based on evidence-based research with the help of leading experts in early childhood intervention.

The approach supports [best practice in early childhood intervention](#) because it helps the child and family to build their capacity and supports greater inclusion in community and every day settings, meaning each child will be provided with opportunities to grow and learn. It is about giving children and their families the right supports to enable them to have the best possible start in life.

A child's early years are very important as they set up how they will learn and develop later in life. Our early childhood approach focusses on being both family-centred and strengths-based. We do this by acknowledging that as parents and carers you know your child best.

Families are at the centre of all services and supports. Early childhood intervention should fit in as much as possible with your child and family's daily activities. To learn more about early childhood intervention, watch this [family perspectives video](#).

Our early childhood approach aims to:

- provide timely support to ensure that you are able to access the supports you need
- give you information about best-practice early childhood intervention supports and how you can help your child
- increase your confidence and capacity to manage and respond to your child's support needs
- increase your child's ability to do activities they need or want to do throughout their day
- increase your child's inclusion and participation in mainstream and community settings like childcare or recreation
- give you information about, and referrals to, other support services if needed, like parent support groups.

Learn more about the early childhood approach in [our guidelines - early childhood approach](#) .

How the early childhood approach works

In many areas around Australia, early childhood partners are available to help you get the support your child needs through the early childhood approach. Early childhood partners are local organisations we fund to deliver the early childhood approach.

What if my child is older than 7?

The NDIS also supports children who are over 7 through our [local area coordination partners](#).

An early childhood partner, local area coordination partners will work with you to understand your child's needs and connect you to mainstream and community supports in your area.

They can also help you see if the NDIS is right for your child.

Reviewing how we support young children and their families

The NDIA is implementing improvements to the way we are supporting young children and their families early, to reach their full potential.

Read the latest update on how we're progressing with the ECEI reset.

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