



Parent Resource

Preparing for appointments to talk about your child's development

A tip sheet for parents and carers

If there are any concerns about your child's development and you are seeking help, you will be visiting professionals including your doctor (General Practitioner and/or Paediatrician) and your local Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) provider. These tips will help you to prepare for appointments, communicate your child and family's needs and priorities effectively, and gain the best information and support possible.

Think about your child and prepare information to share

You have lots of knowledge about how your child behaves and functions in daily life. Think about different times of the day, the things you see your child doing well and the times you may notice things are harder for them. Any written or verbal information others have given you (such as observations or developmental summaries from a preschool educator, or things friends/relatives have observed) can also help the professional you are seeing to understand your child and what she or he may need. It is also important to let them know if there are things your family needs so everyone can support your child better (such as financial help or connections to your community). The time professionals have with your child is limited, and it is helpful for them to have as much information as possible about your child in a range of contexts such as home, the community and preschool.

Some areas of your child's behaviour and functioning to consider:

- ▶ General health, eating and sleeping
- ▶ Self-help skills – dressing, toileting, feeding self
- ▶ Physical development – whole body movements (walking around objects, jumping, balancing, climbing) and using their hands (drawing, threading, opening containers)
- ▶ Social skills – playing with other children
- ▶ Communication – responding to others when they talk, using words to communicate their wants and needs, using gestures (pointing, nodding or shaking their head)
- ▶ Emotional responses – Does your child react in very strong ways to situations? Are there times your child shows no reaction to situations you would expect them to react to? Does your child find it very hard to calm down when upset?
- ▶ Sensory – does your child seek or avoid any noises, textures, types of movement, tastes, smells?
- ▶ Cognitive and play skills – Does your child play with toys in the way they are intended? Does your child show curiosity and explore their environment?



Parent Resource

Preparing for appointments to talk about your child's development

Ask who should attend the appointment

There may be a large amount of information exchanged at an appointment. Sometimes the professional may want your child to be present so they can observe them, other times it may be appropriate to go without so you can talk easily without distraction.

Check before you attend, so you can make arrangements. You may wish to take your partner or a friend for support; this helps you to recall everything discussed and to have some emotional support. If English is not your first language you may also ask for an interpreter when you book the appointment.

Questions to ask if the professional feels your child may need help with their development

Some professionals may provide all the information you need. Other times you may need to ask questions to get the information about options and next steps.

Here are some questions you can ask:

1. Where can I get support to understand my child's developmental needs? Where (or who) do I go to next for help?
2. If therapy is suggested, are there any Medicare plans that I can use to help me pay for therapy and how can I access these?
3. Is there any funding my child or I could be eligible for?
4. Where can I access more information about how I can support my child's development?

5. What support can I access now?
6. What support do I need to apply for? Are there waiting lists I should put my child's name on?

Further links to support you

Information about seeking a diagnosis for your child and the experiences of other parents:

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/disability/videos>

To understand more about the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) for children under 7 years under the Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) approach:

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/how-ndis-works/help-children-under-7>

For further information about early intervention support:

<https://re-imagine.com.au/families/families-what-is-early-childhood-intervention/>