



EVERY POSSIBILITY

A Parents Guide:
Early Childhood Intervention

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Early Childhood Intervention Australia
Level 5, 4 Columbia Court
Norwest NSW 2155
02 9873 2593
ABN 94 083 927 317



About this Guide

This booklet is a guide to help you to get the best out of therapy for your child. We hope it will boost your confidence in working with therapists to help your child develop their opportunities to participate in all aspects of life.

You are the most important person in your child's life and know your child best. You know their likes and dislikes; your family routines, and you spend the most time with your child. This means you are in the best position to help your child to develop through being actively involved in their therapy through play, time at home and out and about together.





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Introduction

All children need help and guidance as they learn, grow and develop. When a child has a developmental delay or disability, they often need more assistance than other children to reach their full potential.

During a child's life they will come across many people to help them on their journey and this resource aims to help families along the therapy path. Receiving a diagnosis or noticing your child is not developing well can be a frightening time. This booklet aims to help reduce some of the stress and confusion that families may experience when their child is initially given a diagnosis, or when a developmental issue has been raised.

This booklet will provide you with information to assist you in making decisions and getting the help and therapy services needed to build your child's skills so they can actively participate in family, school and community life.

What is developmental delay?

Developmental delay is a term used when a child's development is not at the same level in one or more areas compared with other children, and they may be too young for professionals to know whether these difficulties will continue or not. If a child continues to have developmental delay after the age of 6 years, they may receive a diagnosis of intellectual disability or a learning disability.

Children develop at different rates and so developmental delay is when a child's development is significantly (many months) behind that of other children of similar age. For instance, you may have concerns that your baby is very slow to feed or seems not to attend to you or to toys or is not walking or starting to say a few words by two years of age.

For other children, a delay may not become apparent until they are at kindergarten or preprimary. Developmental delay means exactly that; the child needs more time and practice to learn skills in one or more areas. If your child has developmental delay, they have the same needs as other children for warm, secure, nurturing and stimulating environments in which to learn and grow, however they may need extra time and some help to develop skills. This is where therapy can be of great benefit. Some children have developmental delay early on, and then catch up as they grow older. Others may need support and assistance over their lifetime.

Developmental areas

- Everyday routines and activities: including toileting, bathing, dressing, sleeping etc.
- Eating and drinking: e.g. chewing food and swallowing food and drink.
- Fine motor: using hands and fingers for grasping and handling objects e.g. drawing and writing, cutting, using a spoon or doing up buttons.
- Gross motor: developing balance and coordination to move e.g. sitting, crawling, walking, running, jumping, going up stairs, playing sport etc.
- Communication and language: to express thoughts and feelings, asking for what you need and understanding what others say/communicate.
- Cognitive (thinking skills): exploring, discovering, paying attention, remembering, understanding and problem solving.
- Social-emotional: relating to others in a positive way, managing emotions and learning independence skills.

What does 'disability' mean?

Disability affects development, learning and behaviour, which can limit a child's ability to engage in and participate in everyday routines and activities. Examples of disabilities that can affect young children include; cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, vision and hearing impairment. The impact on everyday skills can vary greatly between children. Some disabilities may be difficult for others to notice, while others can affect a child more significantly.

What is Early Childhood Intervention?

Early Childhood Intervention Services are services which focus on supporting your child's learning and the development of skills in the early years, usually from birth to age six. This includes supporting you to gain knowledge about children's development, and to learn ways to enhance your child's development in everyday life.

What is my role as a parent in Early Childhood Intervention?

Therapy works best with your child when it is embedded in daily family life. It is even better when other family members, childcare workers and teachers do the same activities when they are with your child to help them learn and develop. In the parent - therapist relationship, you will work together to set goals and discuss strategies to facilitate your child's development and solve issues along the way.

Therapy is about building on current strengths and using your child's interests to make it motivating.

Therapy can occur during play, at home, and in the community while doing everyday activities such as household tasks and shopping. This means that you are doing things you normally do at home or out and about, but you pick up on opportunities where you can say or do something that will encourage your child to develop and use new skills.

“ I realised by doing so many therapy ‘sessions’, that I had made my child a project not a child, and we were missing out on those precious family and fun times due to my desperation for a ‘fix’. I’ve now learned that my child can learn while we are doing normal family activities such as pegging the clothes on the line, shopping, setting the table or putting things away. We just need to talk specifically about what we are doing and help her to use her hands in ways that develop her coordination.

”

BETH - PARENT

Embedding therapy strategies into your everyday life works well for a few reasons:

- 1:** It is more comfortable for everyone as you are in your natural environment.
- 2:** It is less time consuming as you don’t have to find specific time each day to “do therapy”.
- 3:** It can make everyday activities a little more challenging and fun for your child and for you as a family.
- 4:** It can be less stressful than having to go to lots of therapy appointments.
- 5:** It is easier to track your child’s progress in real life situations, and for skills they need in real life.

What do therapists do?

Early Childhood Intervention therapists are allied health professionals who work with children and families. They can provide support, assessment, advice and strategies to promote child development and learning. The allied health professionals who most commonly work with children with disability or developmental delay are; Occupational Therapists (OT), Physiotherapists, Speech Pathologists (SP), Psychologists and Social Workers. Not every child needs to have assistance from all of these people. Your team may be small, or large depending on your child and family needs.

“Getting a diagnosis can take time - sometimes many months and many appointments. It might feel like you are taking two steps forward and one step back. You may try a few different therapists before finding someone you are happy with, and who is the right fit for you and your child”

ALEX - PARENT

Occupational therapists work with you to help your child participate in and build independence in everyday activities such as; dressing, mealtimes, learning and play. This may involve; helping your child to use their hands to reach, hold and manipulate objects during everyday activities; providing specialised equipment (e.g. hand splints, wheelchairs, mealtime equipment, bathing equipment) to assist in access, participation and safety; providing advice about toys, activities and games suitable for your child; and recommending adaptations to their environment in home, school or day care. Occupational therapists can also support a child who may have social, emotional, sensory or behavioural challenges that impact on their comfort, sense of security and interactions with those around them.

Physiotherapists work with you and help your child to actively participate in movement skills such as sitting to play and moving between positions (such as from lying to sitting and walking around their environment). Physiotherapists support parents and carers with strategies for positioning, carrying and encouraging overall motor development. They also focus on fitness and the skills required for recreation and chosen sports. For some children, specialised equipment may be considered to support their development, position or mobility. Some examples include; orthotics (shoe inserts), walking frames, wheelchairs, support when lying down and recreational equipment such as bike modifications.

Speech Pathologists work with you to help your child learn skills to communicate and to process information. Information and support is provided to families on how to build effective communication environments, and to help children with information processing and interaction skills. Speech Pathologists help children develop their social skills and can provide support if there are difficulties in eating and drinking. Sometimes alternative methods of communicating such as using signs, a communication board or specialised device (for example a PODD communication book) will be recommended to assist the child to communicate (or similar).

Social Workers and Family Systems therapists provide counselling and support for families. They can provide information about what services and supports are available and can help family choose the most appropriate services. Social Workers and Family Systems therapists can also provide information for parents who wish to meet other families with similar experiences.

Other helpful people. Some families may benefit from services provided by other professionals. Some of these professionals include:

- Audiologists who specialise in hearing and listening skills for your child.
- Dieticians who specialise in nutrition and diet.
- Podiatrists who specialise in feet, foot posture and shoe fitting.
- Orthoptists and Developmental or Behavioural Optometrists who specialise in vision.
- Educators and Early Educators (depending on where you live).

It is also important to have a doctor/General Practitioner (GP) and /or a Paediatrician (doctor who specialises in the health of babies, children and adolescents), who can develop a positive and ongoing relationship with you.

Your GP will be able to help co-ordinate your child's healthcare, advise and refer you to specialists, and be able to refer you for therapy funding. Your GP can also refer you to a Paediatrician who specialises in children's health and development.

Therapists working together with families,
help children to develop, learn and
participate in everyday activities.

Why engage with Early Childhood Intervention services?

Early Childhood Intervention occurs at a time when your child is developing most rapidly when the brain and body are growing and developing. The foundations for many skill sets are laid down in the early years from birth to age five, with learning and development continuing throughout our lives but at a slower rate. Experience has shown that starting early to encourage learning and development has positive effects in helping children to participate in school, friendships and recreation opportunities and to have fewer problems in the future.

“ Starting
therapy early
really helped my
child get a head
start. It was
great to see him
starting to learn
to walk ”

CLARE - PARENT



Early Intervention Services work with you to:

- 1:** Build your confidence in playing and interacting in ways that support your child's learning and development.
- 2:** Make the most of your child's young age when they are learning and developing skills at a faster rate than later in life.
- 3:** Maintain and develop your child's abilities and skills to prevent disability from increasing.
- 4:** Utilise the early stages of recovery from an illness or accident.
- 5:** Help your child to be ready for kindergarten, school and to make friends.
- 6:** Support your child to participate in home and community activities.

When you first begin to work with a therapist/s, you may have an expectation that attending regular therapy sessions will be the key to your child's progress. However, as therapy is not the main learning environment for a child, most learning will occur within family life, school life and in the child's community.

As with all development, it is the consistent shaping of skills and positive support of your child during daily life that helps gradual learning to occur. This is why therapists work in partnership with you, your family and other key people in your child's life. They work with you to share knowledge, information and offer strategies to help you support your child's learning, development and independence.

As your child grows, he/she will be encouraged to set their own goals and be more involved in developing strategies that assist them in their daily life.



Early Intervention simply
means doing things as early as
possible in order to achieve
the best result

BETTER HEALTH CHANNEL



“Best Practice” in Early Childhood Intervention services

Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA) has developed a set of ‘best practice’ guidelines for Early Childhood Intervention professionals (therapists) - The National Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention. These practices are also relevant to older children and should underpin the services that you and your child receive. Being familiar with these guidelines can help you to make informed decisions about choosing the right therapy service for you and your child, and to maximise the benefits of the therapy relationship.

A family-friendly version of the guidelines can be found [here](#)

The following is a summary of the key points of the National Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention:

- 1: Family is at the centre of all services and supports:** Therapists work together with your family as active and equal partners where planning, and services for your child are based on; your family life, your priorities, and your choices. You are actively involved in setting your goals, developing strategies with the support of your therapist, using the strategies between visits, and monitoring whether the strategies are working. Therapists provide you with complete, unbiased information so you can make informed decisions about what to do. As your child gets older and can participate more in setting their own goals they are encouraged to be as actively involved as possible.
- 2: All families are different and unique:** Therapists provide services and supports in ways that are sensitive and respectful of your family’s; culture, language, social background, values and beliefs. As each family and child is unique, your services will look different to other families and children. Personalised services are important to get the best outcomes for your child and family.
- 3: Your child at home and in the community:** Your child has the right to fully participate in the community and have access to the same choices, experiences and opportunities as other children. Participating fully and meaningfully in settings with their peers gives your child increased opportunities to develop friendships and to learn social skills. For inclusion to be successful, therapists work together with your family, child care, school and community organisations, to provide the support your child needs.
- 4: Your child practises and learns new skills everyday:** Your child learns and practises skills through participating in activities of interest as well as the activities and daily routines of their everyday life.

- 5. Team around your child:** Therapy works best when families, therapists, early childhood educators, teachers and other important people in your child's life, work together as a team around your child to support their learning and development.
- 6. Building everyone's knowledge and skills:** Therapy is most effective when the adults who spend the most time with the child know how to encourage their learning and development. Therapists will support you to build the knowledge, skills and confidence of your family and the important people in your child's life - including the child, to have the biggest impact on their independence and participation.
- 7. What you want for your child and family:** Therapists will focus on what you want for your child and family and will work closely with you to achieve the best outcomes for your child.
- 8. Quality services and supports:** It is important that the therapists working with your child and family have appropriate qualifications and experience and base their interventions on sound clinical research. This, plus the knowledge you bring, helps to develop your child's and family's personalised plan.

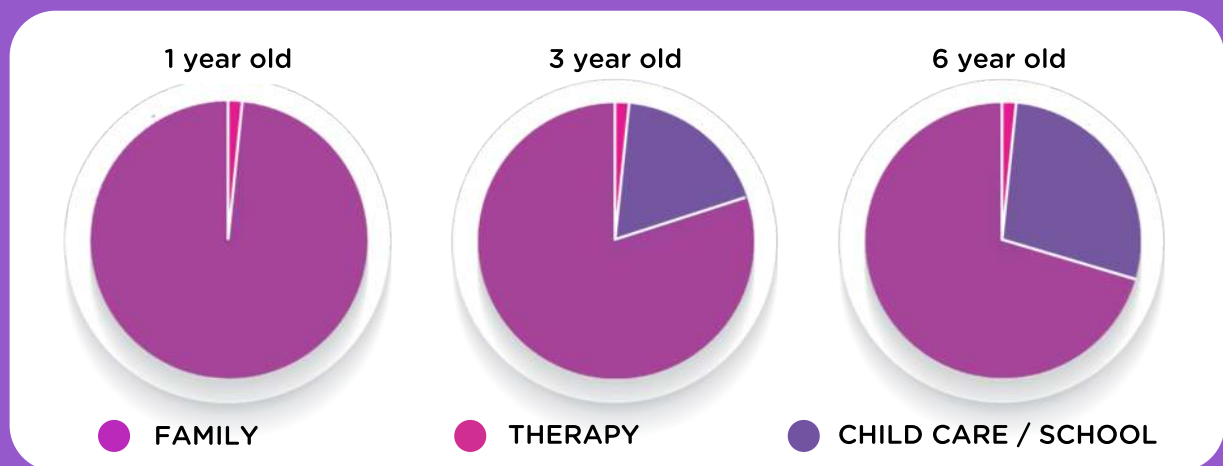


What does therapy for children look like?

When you first meet with your Early Childhood Intervention therapist, time is spent focusing on getting to know each other. The more therapists know your child, you and your family, and what's important to you, the better they are able to provide services which suit your child's needs and your family's needs. This is known as "family-centred" practice.

Research has shown that the best results from therapy services are gained from the experiences a child has in their everyday life, and how therapists work together with parents, family members, friends, and teachers to develop practical strategies to support each child to grow and develop. Today's Early Childhood Intervention is based on evidence about how professionals can support you as parents and other important people in your child's life, to provide opportunities for learning in everyday routines and activities.

This infographic shows the 'average' amount of awake-time a child spends in different learning environments during an average week. Although this will be different for every child, it shows the importance for therapy strategies to fit in to a child's everyday life.



Initially, therapists need to understand any concerns you have about:

- Your child's progress
- Areas of daily life that are going well
- How your child participates and interacts with others during their day
- Areas you would like your child to be developing more in
- What your child is interested in and engages in
- Factors which affect how easily you can do things with your child that will help them learn and develop

The therapist may also do some assessments to gather information about your child's strengths and abilities. This information will help the therapist tailor the environment to best support your child's learning and to make sure new skill development strategies are targeted at the right level. Authentic assessment is ideal. This means looking at what your child does naturally rather than based on a specific set of assessment tasks. Observation and assessment can occur in your home, at the childcare centre, kindergarten or school; wherever you feel will be most comfortable for you and your child.

Where can therapy be provided?

“Therapy” can happen at any time of the day which gives it a better chance of being used in everyday settings and over longer amounts of time, not just in a clinic.

Therapists provide services in a variety of ways. It is important to always consider if your service is being provided in a way that helps you and will ensure that the goals for your child are met. Therapists can work with you and your child in a variety of different places. These include:

- Your home
- Your child's childcare centre
- Kindergarten or school
- Community settings such as the playground or public pool
- A clinic or centre

Therapy can be provided with you present, so the therapist can support you to build your understanding and skills. Therapists can assist you by demonstrating, guiding, suggesting and informing you about strategies that will enhance your child's development. Your ideas and input are important. You can talk to your therapist/s about the strategies you find most helpful, and what will fit best into your life and your child's daily routine. Remember that it is between therapy sessions/ visits that your child learns most, as you and other important people in your child's life apply the strategies and techniques developed with your therapist.



In groups: It is important that the group meets the outcomes you want for your child. Think about how your child's engagement in group work translates to your child's real world. Groups can be good for learning social and communication skills, and for parents to talk with each other afterwards.

At parent workshops: These are great opportunities to gain knowledge and talk to other parents who may be experiencing similar issues. It is important that you receive some assistance to apply the information after the workshop.

Therapists: Working directly with your child without you, or other key people present. This option is best used when your child is old enough to be able to understand and apply the skills they have worked on with the therapist without assistance.

The "Key Worker" model

Some therapy services use a "Key Worker" approach when working with families. This is when **one key therapist** becomes the primary point of contact for the family and works with them very closely to develop a strong, positive, ongoing relationship. You can ask about having a key worker and how best it will work for you.

“With one person who knows you, you don’t have to double up on conversations, you only need to relay information to one person.”

LISA - PARENT

The role of the key worker is to work directly with your 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 your family has access to the other therapists in the therapy team as needed.

For example, if a family has a physiotherapist as the key worker and the family requires support with a specialised area such as drinking safely at mealtimes, then a speech pathologist will be brought in to assist with this. In addition to providing therapy, the key worker can help families with access to other services and supports, such as planning to start school.

Helpful things to remember when working with therapists

- You are an equal partner in the working relationship with a therapist. You know your child best, and you have the parenting role.
- Working collaboratively with therapists, childcare workers and teachers, will give your child the best chance of making good progress.
- You have the right to ask questions and to ask for help in ways that suit you and your child.

“Doing therapy really helped me realise how much great stuff we were already doing to help our son learn to communicate- it made me feel like we were doing ok.”

BRAD - PARENT

- Working therapy into your everyday routines such as shopping, dinner time, hanging out the washing, playing at the park, or doing household chores will save you time because you don't have to make special time to do therapy "homework".
- If your therapist is not doing this, you can ask them to demonstrate or guide you with therapy strategies. It could be beneficial for the therapist to watch while you do it, so you can problem-solve with them and feel confident with the strategies when the therapist is not there.
- You can ask your therapist about any aspect of your child's life and development. If they don't know the answer, they can connect you with another service or person who can provide you with the information you need.
- You have a right to accurate, unbiased information about your child's development/capabilities, services available and what strategies should assist in advancing their wellbeing and development.
- It is very useful to ensure you understand WHY you are doing a certain strategy. You will feel more confident if you know why it should facilitate your child's learning and development and how it does this. It is helpful to tell the therapist any achievements, issues or problems you are having at home regarding your child's development, so the therapist knows what is important for your child and your family, and how best to assist. If you are not happy with how the therapist is working, talk it over with them, ask questions, and tell them your preferences. If you still feel dissatisfied, remember you have a right to get a second opinion, change therapist or make a complaint.

“It’s about working together. Me, as the parent, the therapist and my child, and learning as we go. It’s OK to discuss with your therapist that something isn’t working and not feel bad about it. ”

JOSIE - PARENT

How does therapy work? Setting goals for your child

One of the first things you will be asked by your therapist is what your goals are for your Child. This just means talking together about what areas of life are going well, and what areas your child needs help to develop- especially where you notice your child is not doing things that other children of the same age are doing, or something that is impacting on outings or going to kindergarten (such as toilet training). Working in partnership with therapists and teachers will help you to feel supported and to have a shared vision for your child. This partnership can also help to build your child's emotional and social wellbeing.

When deciding on goals it can be useful to ask some questions to help you choose where to start such as:

- What can your child do now?
- What would make a difference to your child's life and to your family experience right now?
- What will help your child to take part in family and community activities more easily?

“The therapist helped us work out how to sit my daughter up so she could play with toys at just four months old; way before I ever thought she would be able to. It was very encouraging.”

BILL - PARENT

Goals might focus on:

- Your life and your family experiences
- Your child's developmental and learning needs
- Your child's health and wellbeing
- Balancing your child's needs with the rest of the family
- Your child's inclusion in community settings

For instance, you may feel that toileting skills are important so that your child can be ready for kindergarten and pre-primary; or that having a way to communicate better would decrease your child and your family's frustration in not understanding what your child wants or is trying to say to you during the day.

“I realised therapy is not the goal. The goal is for my child to learn to walk or feed herself.”

BONNIE - PARENT

A parents story

For my daughter, there were two main goals:

1. To improve her body strength to enable her to work towards walking.
2. To help her learn to communicate.

These are the things that we did that helped her achieve those goals:

- Play time (age 3 months) – learning cause/effect relationship – She had bracelets with bells on so while lying on the floor with toys, every time she moved her hands, the bells sounded, helping her to learn that when she did something a sound was made.
- Play time - (age 4 months) learning to sit up - We would arrange the cushions, and later I was loaned a corner chair so she could sit up and be supported on all sides and play with toys. I could get on with house jobs and chat with her while she increased her core body strength for sitting and learned to play with toys. She eventually learned to sit at about 10 months.
- Bath time - learning signing – At age 1 year we started to introduce signs. This would help her understand speech with the extra cue of a sign, and learn to express her own thoughts (at first, I thought this would be a real drudge, but she communicated the sign straight back to me after just a few tries!) – We learnt “boat” first as she was playing in the bath with a boat. Before I knew it, I would offer juice or milk by signs for breakfast, and she would sign her choice. I think it really reduced her frustration at not being able to talk in the early years, and it helped her speech develop faster. I was able to get the book of signs from asking my therapist, or online.
- Walking to the shops/walking the dog - core balance and leg strength - As we walked to the shops I'd encourage her to walk along walls as then she had to learn balance and learn to put one foot in front of the other and not walk with such a wide gait (stance).
- Walking to kindergarten/shops – learning to communicate - As we walked, I'd talk to her about the houses and gardens, or the moon and show her things. We could learn concepts like fast and slow, run and walk, hopping and jumping, colours of cars, dogs, cats and birds. I'd encourage her and leave silence so she could babble back to me or use any signs or words she had, and then I would respond to what she said.
- Meal preparation and cooking – My daughter would sit in the kitchen with me and we would talk about the different fruit, vegetables and other foods- and how we cut them (thick or thin), and their colours; orange, red, green and yellow. We talked about hot and cold, and tastes such as sweet or salty. I would help her stir (fast and slow), and we'd learn hard (potato) and soft (bread).
- Hanging the washing out – I talked to her about concepts like colours and big/small, wet/dry or clean/dirty.
- At the beach – We could help her practise her words using the “s” sound as this had been hard for her; sun, sand, salty, sunburn cream, safe, seat, surf, side, sign, swim. We would help her to kick in her floaties for leg strengthening and learning to float, or to use her hands to make sand castles and shapes in the sand.

Putting it into practice

The best therapy strategies and interventions are; meaningful, easy to do, fit into your daily life and support your child to learn skills that help them to be part of their family and community. This example shows how many different skills can be practised during mealtimes.

Skill	Goal Examples
Fine Motor	Using a spoon or knife and fork to eat / spreading butter on bread
Gross Motor	Climbing on the chair / sitting balance / carrying plates to the sink
Communication	Asking for 'more' / making a choice between foods / practising conversation
Cognitive (thinking skills)	Following instructions / setting the table / learning about colour, size, numbers and shapes
Social Emotional	Washing hands before the meal / responding calmly when meal is finished / enjoying family time

There are lots of different ways to record the vision and goals for your child. You could use a table or chart like the one shown here, or you might prefer to create a visual map with drawings, written notes or with pictures or photos. You could also use an iPad to make a video-diary or download a free APP if you prefer a digital record. Try out different ideas to find one that works for you and your family.

Therapy goals can be practised every day, whether they are part of the routine itself, (e.g. following instructions to get ready to go out) or are specific strategies (e.g. making a certain speech sound using 'he' and 'she' correctly, or using fluent speech). It's important to talk with your therapist about how you could fit regular practice into your daily routine. Making the most of the situation and objects around you will mean that you can use daily activities to apply the strategies practised during therapy and help your child to progress.

There may be times when you need to practise a specific strategy in a specific game or using particular items. This can help you and your child focus on the goal and allow for lots of repeated practice with specific feedback. Your therapist will work with you on how, when and how often to do this so that it works for you and your family without making it too tiring.

Having everything written down can help you gradually start to do some of the strategies habitually as part of daily family life.

“ Raising a child with extra support needs can be challenging. Therapists are there to support you to enhance your child’s learning and development - not to make it harder. If you are feeling frustrated or guilty that you are not doing what you have agreed to in therapy, talk about this with your therapist and work out what you CAN do without feeling more stressed. It’s all about developing a community of support for you and your family. ”

PENNY - PARENT



What therapy services are available and how you can find them?

As the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is rolled out across Australia there have been many changes to access and funding for therapy services for children. You will need to talk with your local doctor, child health nurse, Paediatrician or an NDIS ECEI Partner to find out what services your child can access.

Government funded services

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS): The NDIS is an Australia-wide scheme to support people with disability and aims to assist families to access a diverse range of personalised supports and therapy services for their child with developmental delay or with a diagnosed disability. Reasonable and necessary supports and therapy services are government funded and based on a child and family's individual needs and functional goals not a diagnostic label. The services are available to children and adults who are residents of Australia and who have a permanent disability which affects many aspects of daily life.

Contact the NDIS for more information about eligibility and supports and services available. You can also find out more information by contacting; support organisations, the Early Childhood Early Intervention Partner for your area, other parents or on the internet. You can choose which service best meets your needs.

Phone: 1800 800 110 (free call in Australia)

[Find out more about the NDIS here](#)

Early Childhood Early Intervention Partners (ECEI): These services are being rolled out across Australia and are funded by the National Disability Insurance Agency. Early Childhood Partners are experienced in providing early childhood intervention. This service will connect you with early childhood therapy services for children under 7 years of age.

This may mean that your child will be eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) funding to pay for the additional supports your child needs.

Phone: 1800 800 110 (free call in Australia)



Private services and funding assistance

Therapy services can also be accessed through private therapy services. You may be referred to one of these via an Early Childhood Early Intervention Partner. These services may be a sole therapist, a group of therapists that are all from the same therapy discipline (e.g. a group of physiotherapists working at one business), or it can be a group of therapists from a range of therapy disciplines working together at one clinic (e.g. occupational therapists, speech pathologists and physiotherapists).

Private therapy services can be provided in addition to, or instead of, government services. There may be funding options to assist with the cost of private therapy services as explained below. Always ask what your options are for having therapy services fully or partly funded by government or by private health insurance.

Private Health Insurance:

Families may be eligible to receive a rebate to cover part of their children's therapy fees through their private health insurance. Please check with your health fund to determine eligibility for rebates of allied health professional services.

Medicare Funded Therapy:

Some children with a condition that is likely to be present for at least six months may be eligible to receive a Medicare rebate for up to five therapy sessions with a private therapist each calendar year through the Medicare Chronic Disease Management (CDM) Plan. Parents will need to discuss eligibility with their GP, who will coordinate a management plan and provide a referral to a therapist of your choice if your child is eligible. This can be a way to kick start therapy if you are on a waiting list, or to complement other services you are accessing. There will usually be a gap between the Medicare rebate and the fee for the private service.

Phone: 132 011

Medicare Better Access To Mental Health

Some children may be eligible to receive a Medicare rebate for up to ten individual or group allied mental health services each year provided by a psychologist (and/or a Medicare registered social worker or occupational therapist). Parents will need to discuss eligibility with their GP, paediatrician or psychiatrist who will coordinate a management plan and provide a referral if their child is eligible. Services might include cognitive-behavioural therapy, relaxation strategies, social skills training, anger management, support for anxiety or depression etc. There will usually be a gap between the Medicare rebate and the fee for the private service.

Phone: 132 011



Helpful contacts and resources

Early Childhood Intervention Australia

Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA) strives to ensure that every child with developmental delay or disability and their family are supported to achieve their full potential. ECIA is the singular national peak and advocacy body that works with practitioners, government, families and other stakeholders to ensure the very best outcomes for children with developmental delay or disability and their families.



Developmental Disability WA (DDWA)

DDWA was established in 1985 and is a trusted source of independent information, advocacy, education and support for people with intellectual and other developmental disability, their families and the people who support them. DDWA offers free membership to individuals and family members and others who have an interest in advancing the rights and needs of people with disability.



[Find out more about DDWA here](#)

Raising Children Network



[Find out more about RCN here](#)

Early Childhood Australia



[Find out more about ECA here](#)

Carers Australia



[Find out more about CA here](#)

There are many agencies and ways to get support when you are raising a child with a developmental delay or disability. Such a huge range of services can be confusing but remember you can make the choices that you feel best suit your family and your child's needs and family culture. Keep asking questions from a range of sources, including other parents, until you get clear information to help you make your choice..

Notes

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ecia

