



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

National Early Childhood Program

How we worked with the community

An Easy Read report



How to use this report



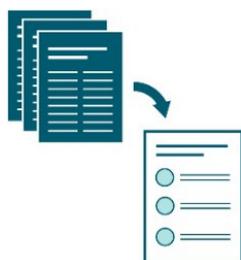
The Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) wrote this Easy Read report.

When you see the word 'we', it means DSS.



A company called *Whereto* Research Based Consulting (*Whereto*) did some research for us.

They also wrote a report.



This Easy Read report is a summary of that report.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



We wrote this report in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Bold
Not bold

We have written some words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 23.



You can ask for help to read this report.
A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.



You can also find more information about this report on our website.

www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/for-people-with-disability/overview-of-early-intervention-services-and-supports



We recognise First Nations peoples as the traditional owners of our land – Australia.

First Nations peoples are also known as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

They were the first people to live on and use the:



- land



- waters.

What's in this report?

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Why do we need the National Early Childhood Program?

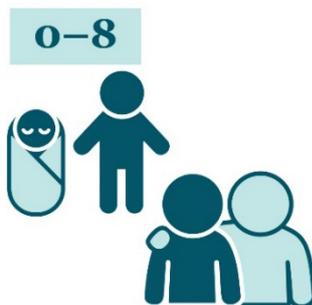


We want to make sure young children get the support they need.



That's why we made the National Early Childhood Program.

In this report, we call it the NECP.



The NECP is for:

- children who are 0–8 years old
- their parents and carers.

It's for children with:



- a disability
- **a developmental delay**
- **developmental concerns.**



These children might not develop at the same pace as other children of the same age.

And they might need some extra help to do everyday things.



If we support these children when they are young, it can help them as they grow.



Over the last 10 years, we delivered lots of community supports through 2 programs.



They are called:

- Helping Children with Autism
- Better Start for Children with Disability.



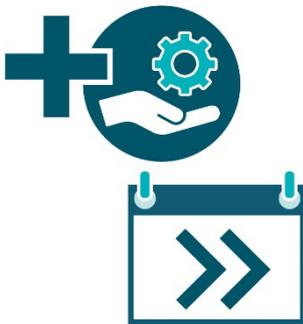
Through these programs we have delivered:

- information
- workshops to support parents
- playgroups for children aged 0–6.



These programs have done a lot of great work to provide the community with supports.

But they will end in 2022.



We want the NECP to:

- build on the great work of these programs
- create new supports
- help more children.

What goals do we have for the NECP?



There are 3 goals we want the NECP to reach.



1. To support parents and carers to understand:

- how their child develops
- what supports their child can get to thrive.



2. To help children get ready for:

- school
- other learning spaces.



3. To support parents and carers to:

- learn new skills to help their child
- connect with supports.



This will help parents and carers feel more confident to support their child as they:

- grow
- develop.

Who did we work with?



We asked a company called *Whereto* to do some research for us.

We wanted them to find out about:



- supports that help families



- how we can reach our goals for the NECP.



As part of their research, we asked *Whereto* to work with the community to find out what:

- young children need
- parents and carers need.

What research did *Wheret* do?

Wheret looked at **data**.

When we talk about data, we mean:



- facts
- information
- records.



Wheret held interviews where they talked to people one-on-one.



They also held workshops where people talked together about their ideas.



Wheret also ran an online survey.

503



503 parents and carers took part in the research.

They each had at least 1 child aged 0–8 years old who has:



- a disability
- a developmental delay
- developmental concerns.

91 professionals also took part in the research, including people who work for:



- early childhood organisations



- disability organisations.

These professionals also included:



- **service providers** – organisations that support people with disability



- research experts.



People who took part came from lots of different:

- places around Australia
- backgrounds.



Some people who took part get supports from the **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)**.



The NDIS is a government program that supports people with disability around Australia.



But other people who took part pay for their own supports.



Many people who took part couldn't find the supports they need.

And they didn't know what supports they could get.

What did *Wheret* find out?



Wheret found out the supports children get has changed a lot.



This includes supports for children with:

- a disability
- a developmental delay
- developmental concerns.



More young children receive supports through the NDIS than ever before.

But it can still be hard for families to get the supports they need.

What do parents and carers want?



When *WhereTo* heard from parents and carers, they found that lots of parents and carers told them the same things.



For example, lots of parents and carers needed to wait a long time before they could get supports.



WhereTo found out that parents and carers want supports for their emotional needs.



This can help parents and carers feel more confident to support their child as they:

- grow
- develop.



Parents and carers also said they want to:

- learn from other families
- share their experiences.



Even though a lot of parents and carers had the same ideas, they can have different:

- experiences
- information and supports needs.



They have children who are different ages.

They also live all around Australia.

And come from different backgrounds.

What do professionals think about the NECP?



Where to find out that professionals had lots of ideas about what might help families.

Some of these ideas included:



- professionals and families working together to support their child



- using digital tools and technology more often, such as websites



- connecting with early childhood programs that already support families.

What should the NECP do?



Where to heard a lot of ideas from:

- parents and carers
- professionals.



The NECP should make sure there is no gap in supports when the 2 programs end in 2022.



The NECP should deliver different supports for children with:

- a disability
- a developmental delay
- developmental concerns.



These supports should also help their families and carers.



But the NECP should also try to work with the information and supports we have at the moment.

How we want the NECP to work



We learnt a lot from *Wheretō*'s research.

These ideas come from what parents and carers said.



The NECP should support families and their children who have just found out they need early childhood supports.



This is a good first step before families and their children look for other supports.



Wheretō found out that parents and carers want steps that are easy to follow.

And steps they can take straight away.



The NECP should deliver different types of supports for people from different backgrounds.



This includes First Nations families and children.



To give them the support they need, the NECP should deliver supports that:

- suit the needs of different communities
- are safe for each community.

To make sure they work well, we should deliver NECP supports:



- in the community as much as possible



- to groups of people at the same time to help the community support each other.



NECP supports should also focus on children's needs.

Parents and carers should be able to choose to receive NECP supports in different ways, such as:



- in-person



- online.



There should also be different ways for people to find out about NECP supports.



And we should use the supports we have at the moment as much as possible.

What happens next?



We will look at all of the information Wheret^o gave us.

And we will work out how we want the NECP to run.



After this, we will choose service providers to help us deliver the NECP.

In 2 years, we will check the NECP to make sure:



- we reach our goals



- it's still important for the community.

Word list

Data



When we talk about data, we mean:

- facts
- information
- records.



Developmental delay or concerns

Children with developmental delay or concerns might not develop at the same pace as other children of the same age.



National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The NDIS is a government program that supports people with disability around Australia.



Service providers

Service providers are organisations that support people with disability.



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