



# National Best Practice Framework for Early Childhood Intervention

## A Guide for Policymakers



### Our vision

**All children with developmental concerns, delay or disability and their families thrive in the early years**

The Framework describes what high-quality evidence-informed practice looks like to support young children with developmental concerns, delay or disability, their parents, carers, and families.

The Framework has been developed in response to the [Early Childhood Targeted Action Plan \(TAP\) Action 2.4 under Australia's Disability Strategy \(2021-2031\)](#).

The aim of this guide is to engage with and support policy makers in their understanding of the Framework so that best practice in early childhood intervention can be used to inform policy development.

### The Framework describes

- the vision and aims for children with developmental concerns, delay or disability and their families
- desired outcomes for children, parents, carers, families, communities, and services
- principles for guiding best practice
- practices, tools and resources for early childhood intervention practitioners, and
- guidance for parents, carers and families on what to expect from best practice early childhood intervention

### The Framework is designed to be used by

- early childhood intervention practitioners;
- parents, carers and families of children with developmental concerns, delay or disability;
- universal services such as education and health services supporting children and families;

- additional support services (such as child and family support services, mental health services); and
- community-based services and facilities

The National Framework for Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) aims to support the provision of a path to universal, equitable and high-quality ECI based on best practice for children with developmental concerns, delay or disability no matter the source of the ECI services and supports they seek and receive across Australia.

## Policy implications of the Framework

Policy makers play a crucial role in developing stakeholder and evidence-informed policy and programs based on identified priorities and goals at the local, state and federal government levels, and in private and not-for-profit organisations. They can guide the decision-making that is responsible for standards and regulations. Policy makers also inform the allocation of resources and can advocate and engage with community members.

The Framework includes the guidance needed for ECI – a specialised and complex field of practice. It aims to inform policy decisions to address the shifts in practice currently needed to ensure best practice can be equitably received by children and families across Australia.

The vision, aims, principles and practices included in the Framework collectively aim to support:

- a recognition that all children with developmental concerns, delay or disability need timely access to best practice ECI
- **a shift** in delivery of ECI services from clinical to **everyday settings**
- a deep understanding of, and commitment to, family-centred, culturally safe services and practices delivered by connected, collaborating teams
- the capabilities of parents, carers and families to strengthen their children's functional skills
- a re-orientation of services and practices to be **outcomes-focused** - based on the primary aim of ECI that children, parent, carers and families are **included and meaningfully participate** in early years and community-based settings
- **a national agreement** on the aims and outcomes of early childhood intervention services and systems to drive alignment of policy settings and resourcing decisions across the States and Territories

**This resource provides guidance to policy makers and program designers to support their work with services and organisations in the application of practices that:**

- recognise and protect the rights of children
- recognise families' fundamental role in their children's, learning, development, and well-being, and that for children to thrive, families need to thrive. So, families, as well as children, need support

- acknowledge that positive and nurturing relationships are critical for children to thrive
- build on child, parents, carers and family and community knowledge, capabilities, and resources
- understand the impact of political, social, cultural and physical influences on children, families, communities and services
- promote children's voice, identity and emotional and behavioural wellbeing
- build children's strong identities and connections to their culture and community
- provide support and services that are culturally safe for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, and communities.
- value and respect the abilities, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status of children and families
- ensure children's inclusion, participation and meaningful involvement in places and spaces where they learn, develop and spend time
- ensure services are connected and integrated
- create welcoming and inclusive community environments where children and their families feel valued and accepted
- develop, measure and monitor outcomes for children, parents, carers and families
- ensure children and families have access to evidence- and trauma- informed early childhood intervention practices

## How can policy makers use the Framework to improve outcomes with children and families?

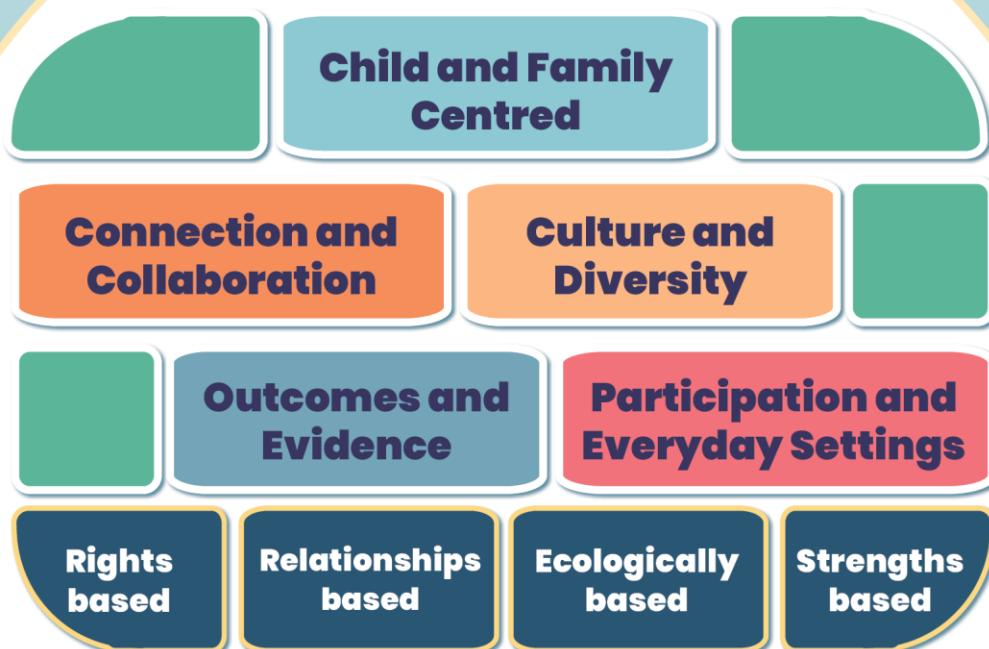
- **Raise public awareness** about the importance of using evidence-informed ECI practices with children with developmental concerns, delay or disability.
- **Inform funding models that** support nationwide access to evidence-informed early childhood intervention services.
- **Support workforce development among** practitioners in universal and specialist community, educational and health sectors on evidence-based practices and strategies.
- **Implement systems to track and evaluate the effectiveness** of early childhood intervention services to ensure and improve quality practice leading to child, family, community and service outcomes.
- **Consider the Framework's intended outcomes, principles, and practices** to inform the design of foundational supports and NDIS reforms across education, health and social care sectors at the local, state, territory, and Commonwealth levels.

# National Best Practice Framework for Early Childhood Intervention

All children with developmental concerns, delay or disability and their families thrive in their early years



Aims and outcomes for children, families, communities and services



**Principles and Practices**



**An integrated system providing a continuum of support for children and families**

Universal Supports

Foundational Supports

National Disability Insurance Scheme

## Access Tools and Resources for the National Best Practice Framework for Early Childhood Intervention

You can find more information about the National Best Practice Framework for Early Childhood Intervention online here: <https://healthy-trajectories.com.au/eci-review/>

- Practice guidance
- Looks like/doesn't look like practice tools
- Podcasts
- Videos
- Family resources
- Read about how the Framework was developed



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