

# Early Years COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

**Parent/carer readiness:** Sometimes parents and carers are not ready to hear concerns about their child, or to go ahead with a referral to a service that could support them. It can take time for families to process this information. We also need to consider parents and carers own thoughts and feelings about developmental delay and disability. This can be complex and sometimes linked to cultural and personal perceptions and stigmas. Families could also be feeling overwhelmed with the idea that their child may have a developmental delay or disability and are grieving. Seek support from your leadership teams on strategies on how to approach this with the family gently and supportively.

**Parent/carer capacity:**  
A parent or carer might not have the capacity to support their child YET. Some families might require warm referrals to and between services, a support person to sit in meetings with them, an advocate who can support the family to have their voices heard. It is important that we support the families to feel empowered to support their child's development, and to build their capacity to feel confident to do this.

**Costs:** Paying for private assessments and therapy is expensive. This is often a barrier to families.

**Wait times:** Wait times can be extensive. Therefore, having conversations with families as early as possible is so important.

**Time and competing priorities:**  
Families are busy and there are often competing priorities amongst families (work, school, study, cost of living, housing etc). All of which could become a barrier to families seeking support for their child.

**Residency status and citizenship:** This is a barrier for children and families to be eligible to engage certain supports.

#### Strategies to respond:

- Listen and understand where families are coming from.
- Be respectful to families' circumstances.
- Educate yourself about programs, initiatives and supports available in the community that families can engage with in the interim while awaiting engagement with a service provider or health professional.

*The Early Years Community of Practice supports early years practitioners across the ECEC, education and health sectors to regularly come together to hear from relevant topic experts and share their understanding and knowledge of the current issues in areas of relating to the early years. It aims to blend individual and collective learning through the development of a shared practice. Resulting in improved understanding, practice and connection, leading to better outcomes in the ACT for children and families in the early years.*

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MATERIALS AND RESOURCES



SCAN ME



# Do you have concerns about a child's development?

## Observe the Child

Make some observations of the child's play, communication and behaviours. Consider completing a Developmental Milestones checklist to go alongside your observations.

## Talk with the parents or carers

Talk with parents or carers about your observations and concerns. Ask the family if they have noticed anything about their child's development. Remember the family know their child best.

### Remember:

A child under 6 years does not need a diagnosis to receive supports from EACH

## About EACH

When the family is ready, share information about EACH. EACH can support a family or carer to understand the child's needs and recommend what early connections are best for the child.  
<https://www.each.com.au/service/early-childhood-early-intervention>

## What is a Developmental Concern?

Developmental Concerns are concerns about a child's development, compared with other children their age. This may include how they:

- Play and move around;
- Do things to take care of themselves;
- Socialise with other children;
- Communicate what they want.

### Resources:

- Early Childhood Approach: EACH Resources for families and communities  
<https://www.each.com.au/ecei-resources-for-families/>
- A potential observation tool you could use can be found BeYou website:  
<https://www.beyou.edu.au/resources/betls-observation-tool>
- The Australian Parenting Website supported by the Australian Government Department of Social Services: <https://raisingchildren.net.au/>
- The Developmental Milestones and the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards  
[https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05\\_2015/developmental-milestones.pdf](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/05_2015/developmental-milestones.pdf)
- THRIVARY app provides guidance, information and learning on all things early childhood development and early intervention (0-8yrs), <https://thrivary.com.au/>

## Refer to EACH

With consent from the family refer to EACH, or support them to self refer:  
<https://each.snapforms.com.au/form/ndis-referral-to-early-childhood-partners>

EACH is the NDIS Early Childhood Partner in ACT, Greater Ipswich, South West Sydney and Southern NSW. We deliver the Early Childhood Approach for children aged 0-6 years with a disability or developmental delay. We work together with parents, carers, and families to support children to have the best possible start in life.

**each**