22 May 2025

The Children’s Expert Advisory Group (CEAG) met for their seventh meeting on Wednesday 22 May 2025.

This meeting was held online.

Focus of the meeting

The chair, Jo Wickes, Acting General Manager, Children’s Strategy and Services, National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) opened the meeting. The meeting focused on the design of the future new early intervention pathway for children younger than 9 including parent and carer experience and insights, design principles and considerations for the role of lead practitioner within future state National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) early intervention supports for children younger than 9.

Children’s pathway design

The NDIA presented key themes and challenges raised by parents and carers in recent consultations. Consultation and engagement sessions with parents and carers are focused on gathering feedback about their experiences and insights on design of the future NDIS participant pathway. More co-design sessions with parents and carers will be conducted over coming weeks and months which will continue to inform the design of the children’s pathway. Further updates throughout the consultation period will be provided to the CEAG.

CEAG members provided the following advice to the NDIA:

- Importance of ensuring the NDIA receives feedback from families who are from marginalised communities.
- Consider the impacts of cost barriers on families’ ability to access some mainstream and community services.
- Impacts of wait times for critical early childhood supports.
- Ensuring the participant experience is strengths-based and not deficit-based.

The CEAG discussed the principles developed by the NDIA to guide staff who are working on the design of the new children’s pathway. The NDIA has incorporated the group’s initial feedback into the design principles and requested any further comments before they would be finalised.

Feedback from CEAG members included:

- Design principles should include an approach to engage parents as partners in the pathway process.
- Design should support parent, carer and family capability building.
- The importance of ensuring a person-centred process to recognise and respond to a child’s unique circumstances.

Lead practitioner role

The NDIA presented initial considerations for the role of a lead practitioner within future state NDIS early intervention support for children younger than 9. The NDIS Review recommended that early intervention capacity-building supports for children be based on best practice and evidence and referred to the introduction of the role of a lead practitioner as the main professional working with the family, helping coordinate the team around the child, providing information and advice and support for the family.

Feedback from the group included:

- The importance of best practice early childhood intervention in the design of an approach to supporting children and their families through effective practitioner collaboration.
- Design considerations should make the best use of the practitioners involved with the child and their family without creating additional burden or complexity for families.
- A suggestion that simplifying the NDIS Commission provider registration process may increase the number of providers registered and required to meet NDIS Practice Standards for early childhood early intervention.
- The potential for additional guidelines and accredited training for practitioners to support best practice early childhood intervention and outcomes for children through practitioner collaboration and transdisciplinary practice.

CEAG Next Meeting

CEAG will meet again on 10 July 2025. This meeting will be held online.

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