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What the early childhood approach is

The early childhood approach is for children younger than 9 with delays in their development or disability.

It helps families get the support they need so their child can learn and develop to their full potential.

The early childhood approach aims to support young children early in their life to:

- build their skills and capabilities
- take part in daily activities
- be included in their community.

What early connections are

Early connects forms part of the early childhood approach.

Early connections give you and your child quick access to supports to meet your child's needs. We can help you, even if your child is not eligible for the NDIS.

Types of early connections available

An early childhood partner will talk with you about the different ways you and your child can get supports.

This might include connections:

- with community and other government services
- to practical information that's relevant to your child's development

- with other families
- with early supports if your child is younger than 6 with developmental concerns
- to apply to the NDIS if your child has developmental delay or an impairment for which they are likely to meet the eligibility requirements.

What makes the early childhood approach different

You work with an early childhood partner

Early childhood partners are local organisations we fund to help deliver the early childhood approach.

Our early childhood partners have teams of professionals with experience and clinical expertise in working with young children with delays in their development and their families.

Learn more about [early childhood partners](#).

Children aged 9 and above work with a local area coordinator instead

Children aged 9 and above, as well as teenagers and adults, don't work with an early childhood partner.

They work with an [NDIS partner](#) that is a local area coordinator.

How the early childhood approach benefits your child

It focuses on your child's participation in everyday environments. Children learn and develop in natural, everyday settings.

This includes their own home, and other places such as childcare, playgroup or preschool, where they play with family or friends.

Focuses on supporting families

The important people in a child's life will have the biggest impact on a child's learning and development.

The early childhood approach is designed to work with families, so they have information, tools and support to help their child's development and participation.

Recognises the importance of inclusion for your child

It is important your child has the same opportunities as all children to participate in activities like childcare, playgroup, and other activities.

If you have concerns about your child's development

Developmental concerns

Developmental concerns is a term used to describe delays in a child's development that don't fully meet our definition of developmental delay.

Developmental delay

Developmental delay means a child finds it much harder to do everyday things other children their age can do.

A child with developmental delay needs extra help to do everyday things compared to children of the same age.

For a child to meet the NDIS early intervention requirements because they have developmental delay, they must be younger than 6 and their presentation must meet the definition in the NDIS Act 2013. They must also meet the residency requirements.

If you don't have an early childhood partner in your area

We will work directly with you to connect you to supports and services you need.

You can [contact us](#) if you have concerns about your child's development.

Easy read

Early connections

- [Download the Early connections in easy read docx file](#) - DOCX 67.25 KB
- [Download the Early connections in easy read pdf file](#) - PDF 6.77 MB

Child representatives

- [Download the Child representatives in easy read docx file](#) - DOCX 68.06 KB
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Our guidelines

Early childhood approach

- [Download the Early childhood approach guideline docx file](#) - DOCX 78.17 KB
- [Download the Early childhood approach guideline pdf file](#) - PDF 177.74 KB

Early connections

- [Download the Early connections guideline docx file](#) - DOCX 78.83 KB
- [Download the Early connections guideline pdf file](#) - PDF 190.18 KB

Child representatives

- [Download the Child representatives guideline docx file](#) - DOCX 108.52 KB
- [Download the Child representatives guideline pdf file](#) - PDF 321.31 KB

Video

Learn about getting help for your child younger than 9 in this video.

Getting help for your child

[Transcript for 'How to - Getting help for your child'](#)

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