On this page:

What the early childhood approach is
What makes the early childhood approach different
How the early childhood approach benefits your child
If you have concerns about your child's development
Easy Reads
Our Guidelines
Video

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 connections 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 mainstream supports and 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 they're likely to meet the eligibility requirements for.

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 to help young children with delays in their development and their families.

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

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

They work with an NDIS partner that's 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, childcare, playgroup, preschool and other places where they play with family or friends.

Focuses on supporting families

The important people in a child's life have the biggest impact on their 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’s important your child has the same opportunities as all children to participate in 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 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.

A child must be younger than 6 and their presentation must meet the definition in the NDIS Act 2013 to meet the NDIS early intervention requirements for developmental delay. They must also meet the residence requirements.

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

We’ll work directly with you to connect you to the supports and services you need.

You can contact us if you have concerns about your child’s development.

Easy Reads

Download early connections Easy Read:

- Early connections (DOCX 67.25KB)
- Early connections (PDF 6.77MB)

Download child representatives Easy Read:

- Child representatives (DOCX 68.06KB)
- Child representatives (PDF 7.44MB)

Our Guidelines

Download the early childhood approach guideline:

- Early childhood approach (DOCX 78.17KB)
- Early childhood approach (PDF 177.74KB)

Download the early connections guideline:

- Early connections (DOCX 78.83KB)
- Early connections (PDF 190.18KB)

Download the child representatives guideline:

- Child representatives (DOCX 108.52KB)
- Child representatives (PDF 321.31KB)

Video

Getting help for your child

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

Transcript for 'How to - Getting help for your child'

This page current as of
11 September 2026