



Discussing a child’s development with their family can be difficult and may have multiple layers of complexity. Before raising your concerns with families, it is important to be prepared. You can use the following checklist to help you before, during and after the discussion.

Prepare for the discussion	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>1. Gather your evidence and supporting documentation.</b></p> <p>If you have concerns about a child’s development, the first step is to collect observations or data.</p> <p>It is useful to complete a developmental checklist to capture objective data about the developmental areas where the child could benefit from additional support and the areas of strength for this child.</p> <p>Also, document observations of the child in your learning environment. Include observations that show both the child’s strengths and what the child can do with support (highlight strategies you are using that appear to work).</p> <p>Where possible, discuss your observations and concerns with a colleague (e.g., the Educational Leader, Service Director, or Family Day Care Coordinator) before approaching the family. This will help you to consider different perspectives on your concerns.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>2. Plan for the who, when, and where.</b></p> <p>Your service may have a policy covering sensitive conversations with families – review this before planning the meeting.</p> <p>When planning the meeting, consider:</p> <p><u>Who should be involved in the meeting?</u></p> <p>Usually, the Director, Coordinator/workplace supervisor or Educational Leader and an educator who is most involved with the child. The family member may bring a support person (such as a grandparent or friend) along to the meeting, or if they already have concerns, they might want a therapist or other professional to join them.</p> <p><u>When is the best time to have the meeting?</u></p> <p>A time that is convenient for the family is best.</p> <p>Keep it light when introducing the idea of a meeting. “If you have time for a chat, I’d like to talk with you in the next week or so. Let me know what time works for you.”</p> <p>If the family member asks why you could say, “It’s about how X is going.”</p> <p><u>Where should you meet?</u></p> <p>Choose a place where interruptions are limited.</p> <p>Prepare colleagues if you need to use a space that is usually shared and put a “meeting in progress” sign on the door.</p> <p>Ask a colleague to answer the phone and the door if needed.</p>



<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>3. Understand the referral process and next steps.</b></p> <p>Think about what you would like the family to do after you have shared your concerns. You should know before the meeting what the family's options are.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Within the NDIS Early Childhood Early Intervention approach, a diagnosis is not necessary for the child and family to receive support. There are other eligibility criteria, and you need to be aware of these and understand the referral process to an NDIS early childhood partner (see <a href="https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/families-and-carers/early-childhood-approach-children-younger-7/getting-help-through-early-childhood-approach">ndis.gov.au/understanding/families-and-carers/early-childhood-approach-children-younger-7/getting-help-through-early-childhood-approach</a>). You may consider contacting your local NDIS early childhood partner organisation to find out the most up-to-date information to share with families.</li> <li>○ Seeking a formal diagnostic assessment can be expensive and involve long waiting times. The first step to a diagnosis is usually a visit to a GP or NSW Health Child and Family Health Service, who can provide a referral to a paediatrician, developmental psychologist, or diagnostic service. You may want to prepare a list of local diagnostic services and allied health or other support services to share with families.</li> <li>○ Know where to find reliable sources of information about developmental concerns and the referral process (e.g., <a href="https://www.raisingchildren.net.au">raisingchildren.net.au</a>; <a href="https://www.ndis.gov.au">NDIS.gov.au</a>), so that you can share these with families.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>4. Consider and prepare for the directions the discussion might take.</b></p> <p>Think through how the discussion might go. A family member's response to your concerns about their child's development may not follow your planned direction. Plan for what you will do and say in different situations.</p>
<p>During the discussion</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Raise your concerns gently, supported by the observations you have collected.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Ask for and listen to the family member's viewpoint.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Acknowledge any feelings the family member expresses.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Be professional. Say only what needs to be said.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Reassure the family member that their child is welcome and belongs.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Gently, suggest referral to the local NDIS Early Childhood Partner, or a visit to the child's GP or local NSW Health Child and Family Health Service.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Share reliable sources of information (such as <a href="https://www.raisingchildren.net.au">rasingchildren.net.au</a>).</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Come up with a shared plan of action and follow through.</p>



### After the discussion

<input type="checkbox"/>	Respect parent choice. Smile, keep conversation lines open.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Follow through on what you said you would do.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inform your colleagues of the outcome.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep working to better understand the child in your service.

### Notes