

NDIS: Early Childhood Early Intervention approach

Information for schools – August 2020

The NDIS Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) approach will support children aged 0 to 6 years with disability or developmental delay.

What is ECEI?

The ECEI approach is the way the NDIS delivers early childhood intervention supports for children aged 0 to 6 years with a disability or developmental delay. It focuses on integrating supports to meet the child's needs across various settings, including preschools, playgroups and the early years of school.

Timely, comprehensive and well-integrated early intervention supports will foster inclusion and participation in the child's environment and offers the child the best chance of achieving their potential.

Who is eligible for ECEI?

The NDIS ECEI stream has unique eligibility requirements that apply to children aged 0 to 6 years. To be eligible, children need to have a disability or developmental delay which results in:

- substantially reduced functional capacity in one or more areas of self-care, receptive and expressive language, cognitive development or motor development, and
- the need for a combination and sequence of special interdisciplinary or generic care, treatment or other services which are of extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

How do children access ECEI?

The ECEI approach uses existing referral pathways into early childhood intervention through maternal child health services, paediatricians and general practitioners. Parents and carers with children aged 0-6 years are able to self-refer to their local ECEI provider or they can contact the NDIS in their area.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) engaged local ECEI providers to provide assistance, advice and access to early intervention and support for children aged 0 to 6 years. In NSW, these are:

- [Lifestart](#) in the Central Coast, Illawarra Shoalhaven, South Eastern Sydney, Sydney, and Nepean Blue Mountains
- [Northcott](#) in the Hunter New England, Mid North Coast, Northern NSW, and Western Sydney
- [Mission Australia](#) in Far West NSW
- [Mission Australia](#) and [MacKillop Family Services](#) in Western NSW
- [EACH](#) in the South Western Sydney, and Southern NSW
- [Intereach](#) in the Murrumbidgee
- [Cerebral Palsy Alliance](#) in the Northern Sydney.

ECEI providers will help parents and carers make decisions about the supports and services that will best meet the needs of their child, and will assist parents to set goals for their child.

Schools should encourage parents and carers of children aged 0 to 6 years who appear to have a disability or developmental delay to make an appointment with an appropriate health service for an assessment (e.g. general practitioner, paediatrician or psychologist). This will ensure that underlying developmental health or child protection issues are identified and addressed as early as possible.



Schools can provide to parents and carers, on request, copies of existing assessments and other information on a student's functional and specialist support needs that may assist them in their ECEI planning discussions.

Does the ECEI approach mean a child with disability cannot access an individual NDIS package?

No. If a child aged 0 to 6 years has a disability that may be best supported through an individual NDIS package, an ECEI provider will work with the parents or carers to request access to the NDIS. Once a child's eligibility for an NDIS package is confirmed, the ECEI provider will support parents and carers to develop a plan and connect them with disability service providers of their choice.

Transition to school

Schools are expected to collaborate with parents and carers to support a child's transition to school. For parents and carers of children with additional needs, transition to school requires additional planning and support.

Parents and carers should be encouraged to share their child's ECEI plan or goals with the school as this can inform planning about the child's support needs and reasonable adjustments at school.

With the parents or carers' permission, schools are encouraged to engage with early childhood education providers and early childhood health professionals to facilitate transition to school.

Parents and carers may request a staff member from their child's early childhood centre or ECEI provider to participate in a planning meeting with the local school to facilitate transition to kindergarten.

It may be appropriate for an ECEI provider to observe the student at school when assessing support needs. Schools are encouraged to support this unless this would have a negative impact on the learning or wellbeing of the student or their peers.

More information

NDIS

1800 800 110

<http://bit.ly/ndis-ecei>

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