

What is Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)?

Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention is a set of core principles that guides the way ECI professionals work with families and children with disabilities and/or developmental delay. These principles ensure high quality and appropriate early childhood interventions are delivered to you and your family. There are eight key Best Practices in Early Childhood Intervention, shown below.

Family-centred and Strengths-based Practice

Your family is seen as equal and active partners working with ECI practitioners. Goals and service delivery are based on your family life, priorities and choices. Practices build on your family's strengths and assists you to develop your own set of resources.

Engaging the Child in Natural Environments

Promotes your child's development through play, routines and interactions at home, in the community and in early childhood settings.

Collaborative Teamwork Practice

Your family, ECI practitioners and others work together as a team around your child. A key worker is nominated to coordinate the team.

Capacity Building Practice

Aims to build the skills and knowledge of people, who spend the most time with your child so they will have a greater impact on your child's learning and development.

Culturally Responsive Practice

ECI practitioners provide services and supports in ways that are sensitive and respectful of your family's cultural, language and social backgrounds, as well as your values and beliefs.

Inclusive and Participatory Practice

Ensures that your child is fully included and participates meaningfully in home and community life, with additional supports as needed.

Evidence-based and Accountable Practice

Ensures that practitioners working with your child have appropriate qualifications and base their intervention on sound clinical evidence and research.

Outcomes-based Approach

Practitioners will focus on what you want for your child and family. They will work closely with you to achieve the best outcomes for your child by using their knowledge and expertise.



Evidence based research shows that Best Practice in ECI produces the most effective developmental and functional outcomes for children with disabilities and/or developmental delay. Service Providers using Best Practice principles are considered to be using the benchmark for early childhood intervention services.

A Key Worker is the nominated ECI practitioner who is the main point of contact for your family and helps coordinate the delivery of early childhood intervention services for your child.

An ECI practitioner is a professional who works with your child and family to deliver early childhood intervention. This could be a key worker, therapist or other specialist.

This information sheet is part of a set of resources for families on the principles of 'Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention'.

Early Childhood Intervention Australia (WA/NT Alliance) (2017)
Choosing Quality Early Childhood Intervention Services and Supports for Your Child: www.ecia.org.au

Carers Victoria and ECIA Victorian Chapter (2013)
Making a Start: Building supports for your child and family: www.eciavic.org.au