

What does Engaging the Child in Natural Environments mean?

Learning everyday...

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

Your child learns and practices real skills through everyday family and community life. Places where your child plays and engages in everyday routines and interactions, are known as your child's natural environments. These can include home, child care, kindergarten, playgroup, local shops and recreational centres.

When children are interested, engaged and having fun learning comes naturally.

Routines and every day activities, such as brushing teeth, getting dressed, and meal times are perfect opportunities for your child to practice and build skills. Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) practitioners can optimise your child's learning and development through using everyday routines and activities to build and develop. The best way of knowing what your child does during the day is to see them in their natural environments and talk to you about what your child likes to do and where support is needed.

Therefore, the ECI practitioner may organise visits at home, child care, kindergarten or any other settings that are natural to your child.

ECI Practitioners use your child's natural environments to:

- find out how your day looks as the basis for early intervention;
- help your child take part in daily life at home and in the community;
- strengthen and build your child's skills through everyday routines, interactions, play and activities;
- support you in developing ideas to use with your child as part of your family's routines and your child's everyday experiences; and
- support other professionals such as early childhood educators to provide opportunities for learning and development in their settings.

"Jasmin's language skills just came in leaps and bounds when she started kindergarten. I think it was because she was around other children all day doing real things that she enjoyed doing and was supported by her teachers and key worker. Kindergarten is now a big part of her life and our weekly routine".

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