

NATIONAL GUIDELINES

BEST PRACTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION

(Early Childhood Developmental Supports)

2ND EDITION

UNDERSTAND ME, SUPPORT ME, ENABLE ME

DISCLAIMER

The information set out in this publication is current at the date of first publication and is intended for use as a guide of a general nature only and may or may not be relevant to particular clients or circumstances. Nor is this publication exhaustive of the subject matter. Persons implementing any recommendations contained in this publication must exercise their own independent skill or judgement or seek appropriate professional advice relevant to their own particular circumstances when so doing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The National Best Practice guidelines for Early Childhood Intervention (2nd edition), known as National Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention (Early Childhood Developmental Supports), are guidelines developed by the parents and carers of children with disability, developmental delay and neurodivergence, and the early childhood practitioners who support them, for parents and carers of children with disability, developmental delay and neurodivergence, and the early childhood practitioners who support them. Reimagine Australia acknowledges the generous time, wisdom and insights provided by thousands of parents, carers and practitioners for almost a decade, who have enabled, informed and co-designed the second edition of the National Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention (Early Childhood Developmental Supports).

PROJECT TEAM

Yvonne Keane AM - CEO, Reimagine Australia

Domenica Decrea - Director of Impact, Reimagine Australia

Blake Stewart - Director of Engagement, Reimagine Australia

COPYRIGHT

© 2024 Reimagine Australia. All rights reserved.

You may reproduce and share these materials in whole or in part, provided that you must:

(a) clearly identify Reimagine Australia as the creator/owner of the materials; and

(b) not adapt or change any of the materials without our express consent; and

(c) subject to the restriction in item (d) below, use the materials only for the limited purpose of promoting awareness of best practices in early childhood intervention; and

(d) obtain our express consent before using the materials for a related or secondary purpose to item (c) (whether or not a commercial purpose) including development or delivery of products or services such as training materials or training services.

PUBLISHED BY

Early Childhood Intervention Australia Ltd (trading as Reimagine Australia)

Level 5, 4 Columbia Court

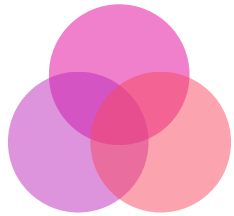
Norwest NSW 2153 Australia

www.reimagine.org.au

Published September 2024

TERMINOLOGY NOTE

It is crucial that we move to a nationally consistent language for early childhood development that no longer provides a barrier for families. This language must be culturally sensitive, positive and easy for parents to understand and engage with. For many years families have told us that, for them, the word 'intervention' has negative connotations - particularly First Nations families, due to its historical use. In and of itself, the term 'intervention' can be a barrier for families in accessing vital early childhood developmental supports. Families have told us they are more comfortable with the term 'early childhood developmental supports' instead of 'early childhood intervention'. Reimagine Australia is deliberate in its decision to honour this significant insight from families and in starting the necessary first steps down the pathway to using a language that enables, not disables, families. This is why, wherever possible we use the term 'early childhood developmental supports' instead of 'early childhood intervention'. We hope, one day soon, to see the rest of sector, both in Australia and abroad, honour this insight and universally move away from using the word 'intervention'.



CEO MESSAGE

REIMAGINE AUSTRALIA

Welcome to the second edition of the National Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention (Early Childhood Developmental Supports).

The culmination of almost a decade of dedicated collaboration with families, practitioners, and sector experts, this updated guidance reflects the evolving needs of young children with disability, developmental delay, and neurodivergence, and their families. At the heart of our work lies an unwavering commitment to inclusion and equity, ensuring that every child has access to the highest standards of care and support, no matter their developmental journey.

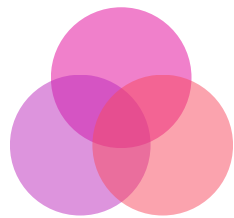
The new guidelines build on the rich legacy of insights gathered from our community over the years, underpinned by the rigorous co-design process that has guided us. Every conversation, consultation, workshop, round table, or survey that we have engaged in for almost a decade always came back to one single core topic - best practice. It was essential that the updated guidelines be grounded in the lived experiences of families and practitioners, and that they offer a universally inclusive framework for best practice, ensuring that no child is treated as an "other," but rather as a valued individual with unique strengths and potential.

We are proud to introduce this groundbreaking work, which, alongside the ChildKind Best Practice Framework, updated Sector Code of Ethics, and our new "Ages & Stages Reimagined" resource, offers a comprehensive foundational toolkit designed to practically support best practice in action. It is my hope that these resources will serve as a beacon for practitioners across all sectors, from healthcare to education, empowering them to support the next generation of children with the care, compassion, and excellence they deserve.

This work is only possible because of the thousands of parents, carers and early childhood practitioners who generously, and oftentimes courageously, shared their experiences and wisdom with us. While this new guidance is designed to be a living set of tools that can be updated and added to in an agile and responsive way, our hope is that in this work we have honoured all that you have shared with us, and that it can be an effective support in enabling children to better realise their potential during their all-important early years.

Warm regards,

Yvonne Keane AM
CEO - Reimagine Australia



CONTENTS

NAVIGATING THIS DOCUMENT

SECTION 01

NATIONAL GUIDELINES REVIEW BACKGROUND

About Reimagine Australia (page 06)
Introduction (page 07)
The Importance of the Early Years (page 09)
A Universally Inclusive Framework (page 11)
Current Systemic Context (page 12)
Background of the National Guidelines (page 14)
Our Review Approach (page 15)
Who this Guidance is For? (page 18)

SECTION 02

NEW 2024 NATIONAL GUIDELINES OVERVIEW

New Best Practice Toolkit (page 20)
What New? (page 21)
Early Intervention Definition (page 23)
Best Practice Conceptual Model (page 24)
New National Guidelines (page 25)
Why - How - What (page 26)
Ways of Working (page 27)
Values and Behaviours (page 28)
ChildKind Best Practice Framework at a glance (page 29)

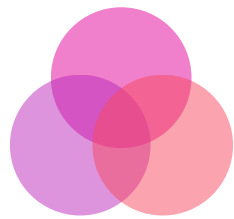
SECTION 03

THE BEST PRACTICE PILLARS EXPLAINED

Pillar One: Understand Me (page 31)
Understand Me in Action (page 32)
Pillar Two: Support Me (page 33)
Support Me in Action (page 34)
Pillar Three: Enable Me (page 35)
Enable Me in Action (page 36)



01: NATIONAL GUIDELINES REVIEW BACKGROUND



REIMAGINE AUSTRALIA

ABOUT US

Imagine a world of unlimited possibility. A world without barriers, where opportunity is infinite; a world where we can be as responsive as we desire; a world where the benefit of effortless access enables profound social and economic dividends for children and their families, communities, and for business and government; a world where children have every opportunity to thrive. At Reimagine Australia this is the world we dream of.

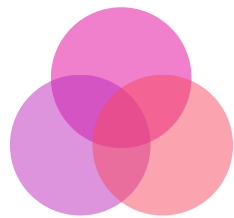
Reimagine Australia, formerly known as Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA), has been the leading Australian body for best practice and early childhood outcomes for very young children with disability, developmental delay and neurodivergence, and their families, since 1986.

As the singular national organisation that works with families, the practitioners who support them, government, service providers, and community to enable the very best outcomes for young developing children and their families, we seek to be courageous advocates for systems redesign and reshaped policy approaches, to ensure that responsive and inclusive supports and services are embedded as a cornerstone of Australian society.

Reimagine Australia's purpose is to ensure that, through best-practice, all children, including those with disability, developmental delay, and neurodivergence, and their families, have every opportunity to realise their potential during their future-shaping early years.

For more than 38 years, Reimagine Australia has been leading the early childhood sector in embedding best practice and inclusive design at its core. We do this by working in continuous co-design with families and the practitioners who support them, to reimagine the future by enabling life-changing outcomes for their children.

Reimagine Australia dreams of a tomorrow where the eco-system supporting families of young children provides them every opportunity to thrive, and where inclusion is not a goal, it's our way of life. Together we can change the future. Are you ready to Reimagine?



INTRODUCTION

BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE REVIEW

Reimagine Australia's 2024 review of best practice guidance, including a review of the National Guidelines for Early Childhood Intervention (1st Edition) is a crucial step in ensuring that we have best-practice guidance that continues to be relevant, inclusive, and effective in today's complex social landscape

Reimagine is committed to developing resources that reflect and respond to the perspectives and needs of all Australian children. The updated best practice guidelines, and supporting tools, were developed over many years of continuous conversation, insight gathering, and co-design with diverse families, and the array of practitioners who support them and their child during their early years.

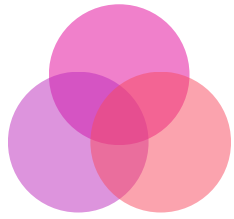
Our 2024 review of best practice guidance is essential to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in today's evolving context. Since their release in 2016, our understanding of intersectionality, disability justice, cultural safety, and trauma informed care has deepened, highlighting the need to embed such principles within the guidelines.

This revision will ensure that the guidelines not only reflect the diverse experiences and needs of all children and their families but also provide a clear, inclusive and actionable framework that is applicable across all service systems that interact with young developing children and their families, including disability, health, education, social services. This expansion beyond the disability system is critical to ensuring that every child, regardless of their circumstances, has access to high-quality, consistent, and connected support.

To enhance accessibility and practical application, the guidelines have been rewritten in clear, easy-to-understand language. The new guidelines and supporting tools were co-designed with families and the practitioners who support them, ensuring that they are grounded in real-world experiences and needs. They focus on the outcomes the guidelines can achieve for children and families, with actionable statements that practitioners can easily implement across various settings.

This review has honoured our commitment to creating a framework that not only upholds best practices, but also adapts to the changing needs of our communities, ensuring that all children and their families receive the support they deserve, regardless of where they live or which services they access.





THE EARLY YEARS

WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT

The early childhood years remain a critical period for all aspects of human development, laying the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour, and health.

Contemporary research continues to affirm that early experiences significantly shape brain architecture and influence outcomes throughout an individual's life. Positive, enriching early experiences are essential for establishing a secure foundation that supports not only cognitive and social-emotional development but also physical and mental health, well into adulthood.

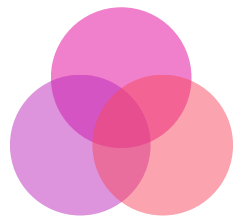
For children with disability, developmental delay, and neurodivergence, the early years are particularly crucial. This period offers a unique window of opportunity to support the development of critical skills and to set in place the learning patterns that will underpin their future growth and independence. Early developmental supports tailored to a child's specific needs can significantly enhance their developmental trajectory, improving their quality of life and their ability to participate meaningfully in society.

In 2024, our understanding of the early years extends beyond individual child development to encompass the well-being of the entire family. Early childhood is a time when families begin to adapt to their child's needs, and when they are most receptive to learning how to provide the best possible support. Families of children with disabilities or developmental delays face unique challenges, and the early years are when they can build the knowledge, skills, and resilience necessary to navigate these challenges effectively. Providing families with the right support during this critical period not only benefits the child but also strengthens the entire family's capacity to thrive.

Moreover, the early identification of disability, developmental delay, and neurodivergence has never been more important. Advances in early screening, detection, and diagnostic tools have made it possible to identify needs earlier and with greater accuracy, allowing for more targeted, responsive, timely and effective interventions. The benefits of early developmental supports extend beyond the immediate family to the broader community, as early support reduces the need for more intensive services later in life, easing the transition to school and ultimately leading to better educational, social and life outcomes.

As we continue to deepen our understanding of the early years, it is clear that a holistic approach - one that considers the child, the family, and the broader systems and social context - is essential. By intentionally focusing on the early years, we can ensure that all children, including those with disabilities and developmental delays, have the opportunity to build a strong foundation for a fulfilling and inclusive future.





UNIVERSALLY INCLUSIVE

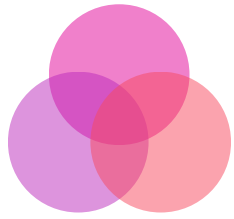
WHY THIS FRAMEWORK IS DIFFERENT

The second edition of the national guidelines represent a truly inclusive early childhood development framework that universally supports all young developing children.

At the heart of this work is how best to support children with disability, developmental delay, and neurodivergence, and their families ensuring they are fully integrated rather than treated as though they are separate, or other, or as an afterthought.

Unlike traditional frameworks that create distinct pathways for neuro-typical and neurodivergent children, our updated best practice guidance and supporting tools embrace a unified approach, recognising that all children, regardless of their abilities or differences, deserve the same opportunities for growth, development, and inclusion.





EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

CURRENT SYSTEMIC CONTEXT

Since the release of the first National Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention in 2016, the landscape for families of young children with disabilities, developmental delays, and neurodivergence in Australia has evolved significantly.

These changes reflect broader shifts in societal attitudes, policy frameworks, and service delivery models, all aimed at creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for all children and their families.

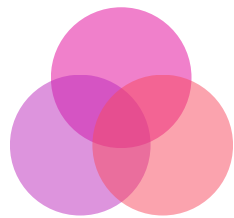
One of the most significant developments is the growing recognition of the need for a universally inclusive service system that can cater to the diverse needs of all children, regardless of their developmental status. The original guidelines played a crucial role in setting a national standard for early childhood intervention, but the complexities and challenges faced by families navigating these systems have persisted. Families often encounter fragmented services, varying eligibility criteria, and a lack of coordination between health, education, and social services, leading to feelings of overwhelm and frustration.

To address these challenges, in 2020 the Reimagine Early Childhood National Action Plan to 2030 outlined a series of necessary actions, and called for reform of the broader early childhood development system. This Action Plan emphasised the importance of creating a universal service system journey that simplifies access and reduces the complexity that currently burdens families. A key recommendation was to streamline the delivery of services and supports so that all families, particularly those with children who have disabilities, developmental delays, or neurodivergence, can navigate the system more easily and receive the support they need without unnecessary barriers or delays.

The findings of the recent National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Review have further highlighted the need for systemic reform, particularly in how the scheme addresses the needs of young children. The review found that while the NDIS has provided critical support to many children with disabilities, it has also contributed to the complexity of the service landscape, with some families experiencing challenges in accessing appropriate and timely services. The review recommends a more integrated approach that aligns the NDIS with broader early childhood services, ensuring that all children, regardless of their NDIS status, receive consistent and high-quality support.

In this context, Reimagine holds that, as a community, we should be increasingly focused on breaking down the silos between different service systems and supporting a more cohesive and inclusive framework for early childhood development. The shift towards a universal service system, as advocated in the Reimagine Early Childhood National Action Plan to 2030, is a critical step in this direction. Reimagine, in its work to review its best-practice guidance, has been intentional about centring the needs of children with disabilities, developmental delays, and neurodivergence within a broader framework that serves all children. In doing so we are supporting the movement towards a more equitable and accessible early childhood system that supports every child's right to develop, learn, and thrive.

As we look to the future, it is clear that the principles of inclusion, accessibility, and family-led care must be at the core of any systemic reform. The lessons learned since 2016, combined with the forward-looking strategies outlined in the Reimagine Early Childhood National Action Plan and the NDIS Review, provide a strong foundation for creating a more just and supportive environment for all young children and their families.



NATIONAL GUIDELINES

BACKGROUND

Reimagine is committed to supporting a best practice framework that reflects and respond to the perspectives and needs of children with disability, developmental delay and neurodivergence.

The review, update and build-out of the second edition of the National Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention was developed in collaboration and co-design with parents, carers, and kin of children with disability, as well as early childhood practitioners.

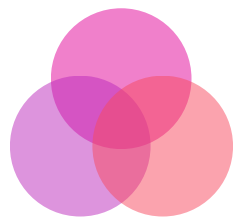
Over the past six years, as we have intentionally worked in deep co-design with families and practitioners across Australia, we have gathered rich and deep insights that fundamentally inform this work.

These insights, along with input from the disability justice movement informed the further development of the 2016 National Guidelines. The new guidance is intended to enable greater adoption of best practice and establish a shared language of 'what good looks like' for children, and their families, as they navigate their early years.



NATIONAL GUIDELINES

**BEST PRACTICE IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD
INTERVENTION**



OUR REVIEW APPROACH

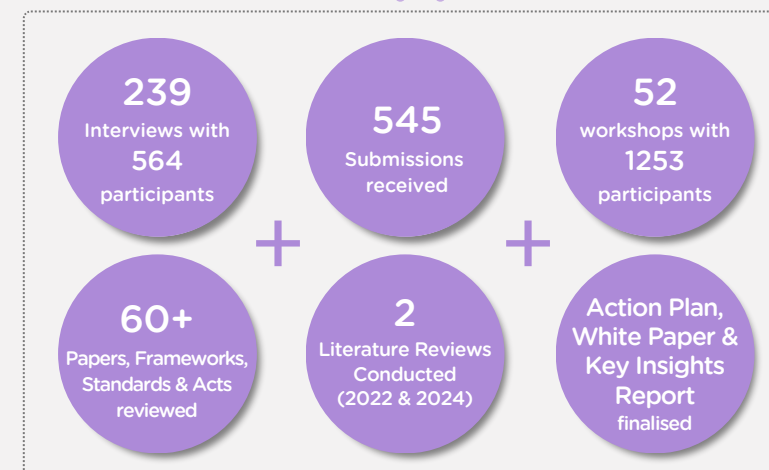
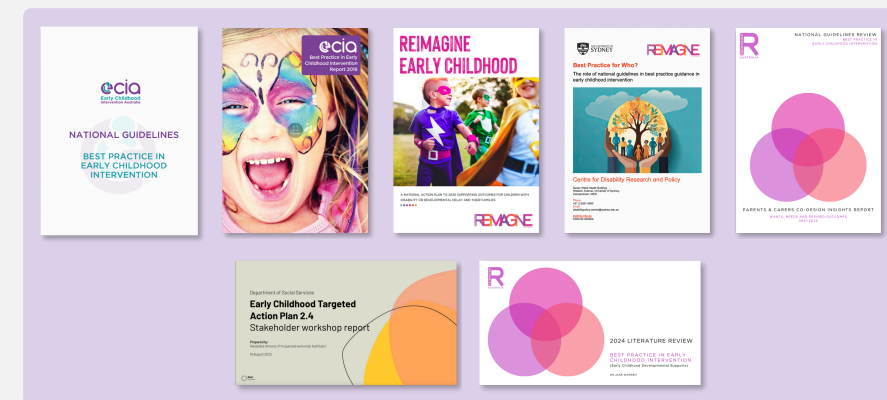
HOW WE GOT HERE

The development of the Best Practice Guidelines for Early Childhood Intervention (2nd Edition) represents the culmination of six years of extensive co-design work, deeply rooted in collaboration with families of young children (aged 0-8) with disability, developmental delay, and neurodivergence, and the practitioners who support them.

This work has been guided by our unwavering commitment to best practice, ensuring that every step of the process reflects the lived experiences and needs of those at the heart of the early childhood developmental supports sector. The 2024 updated guidance has been informed by our exhaustive body of work since the publication of the first edition of the National Guidelines in 2016.

The foundations for the updated guidelines was laid through various large-scale bodies of work including the Reimagine Early Childhood National Action Plan to 2030, commissioned by the Australian Government in 2018. This extensive project involved 130 interviews with 347 participants, who represented a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including families and caregivers from diverse backgrounds, service providers, government departments, educational settings, and NDIS Early Childhood Partners.

BACKGROUND AT A GLANCE: 2015 - 2024



2024 BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE OUTPUT

- National Guidelines (2nd Edition)
- New ChildKind Best Practice Framework
- Ages & Stage Reimagined
- Updated Sector Code of Ethics

The insights gathered during this period were instrumental in shaping the strategic direction of Reimagine's work in revising the guidance for early childhood developmental supports (intervention) in Australia, setting the stage for the additional guidance and tools that have been delivered .

Building on this foundation, the 2023 Best Practice White Paper, independently led by the University of Sydney and partnered by Reimagine Australia, further refined our understanding of best practice in early childhood intervention. Through 14 focus group sessions, five individual interviews, and an interactive forum at the Reimagine 2023 National Conference, we gathered the perspectives of 147 participants, including families, allied health practitioners, educators, and community service organisations. The White Paper was supported by a National Taskforce of 14 peak or representative organisations, ensuring that the recommendations were grounded in the contemporary evidence and sector-wide consensus.

From 2021 to 2024, Reimagine Australia undertook a series of targeted co-design activities. all centred around best practice to ground this work. 55 Reports, Frameworks, Strategies and Standards were reviewed.

WHO DID WE CO-DESIGN WITH?

Since 2018 we have engaged more than 860 participants during 230+ engagements. These participants included:

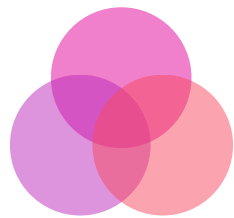
- Families (CALD, LGBTQIA +, First Nations, Regional & Remote, Parents with disability)
- Allied Health & Early Intervention Practitioners
- Service Providers (Sole Traders)
- Healthcare Practitioners
- Paediatric Specialists
- Early Childhood Educators and Support Staff
- Primary School Educators and Teachers
- Community Providers and Service Organisations
- NDIS Support Workers & Case Workers
- NDIS Early Childhood Partners
- Peak and Representative Bodies
- Universities and Academics
- Government Department and Organisations

Through 62 interviews, 16 co-design workshops extensive and comprehensive insights, ideation and solutions insights were gathered and synthesised into key themes. We engaged with a diverse range of participants, including primary caregivers, families, healthcare practitioners, paediatric specialists, educators, teachers, and NDIS support workers. The outcomes of this work provided the essential building blocks for the new guidelines

Unlike traditional frameworks that often segregate or “other” children with disability, developmental delay, and neurodivergence, our new guidelines are universally inclusive, designed to support all young developing children within a single, cohesive framework. This approach ensures that best practice is not an isolated concept but a universally applicable standard that every practitioner, regardless of their role or the setting in which they work, can understand and implement.

Through this rigorous and collaborative process, we have created guidelines that are not only theoretically sound but also practical and actionable. They are written in clear, easy-to-understand language, ensuring accessibility for all stakeholders, from families to practitioners. The co-design process ensured that our updated guidance is grounded in the real-world experiences of those who will use and benefit from it, and will ultimately drive excellence in early childhood developmental supports (intervention) across Australia.

It is intended that the new guidance is a living framework that can easily be iterated and updated, as and when it is required.



WHO THIS GUIDANCE IS FOR

PARENTS AND PRACTITIONERS ALIKE

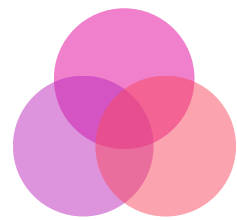
The new Best Practice Guidance has been developed to support all families of young developing children, with a particular focus on those children who have disability, developmental delay, or neurodivergence. It is designed to provide clear, actionable insights and strategies can ensure that children receive the highest quality care and support during their critical early years.

As such, the guidance is a vital resource for the practitioners and professionals who work with young Australian children across a wide range of sectors. Whether you are a healthcare provider, an early childhood educator, an allied health practitioner, an early childhood interventionist, a social worker, or a community organisation representative, this guidance is intended to universally support practitioners efforts in providing inclusive, effective, and compassionate care. It acknowledges that the needs of young children and their families must be met through an inherently inclusive framework, that extends beyond the disability sector, encompassing healthcare, allied health, early childhood education and care, education, social services, and community organisations.

By offering a comprehensive framework that is universal across all service systems that support young developing children, the new Best Practice Guidance ensures that every practitioner, regardless of their specific role, has the tools and knowledge they need to support young children in a way that promotes their development and well-being. This inclusive approach honours our commitment to support families, as identified in the Reimagine Early Childhood National Action Plan to 2030, by removing complexity, addressing exclusion and creating tools for them, and those who work to support them, to enable better outcomes for their child.



02: NEW 2024 NATIONAL GUIDELINES OVERVIEW



UPDATED GUIDANCE

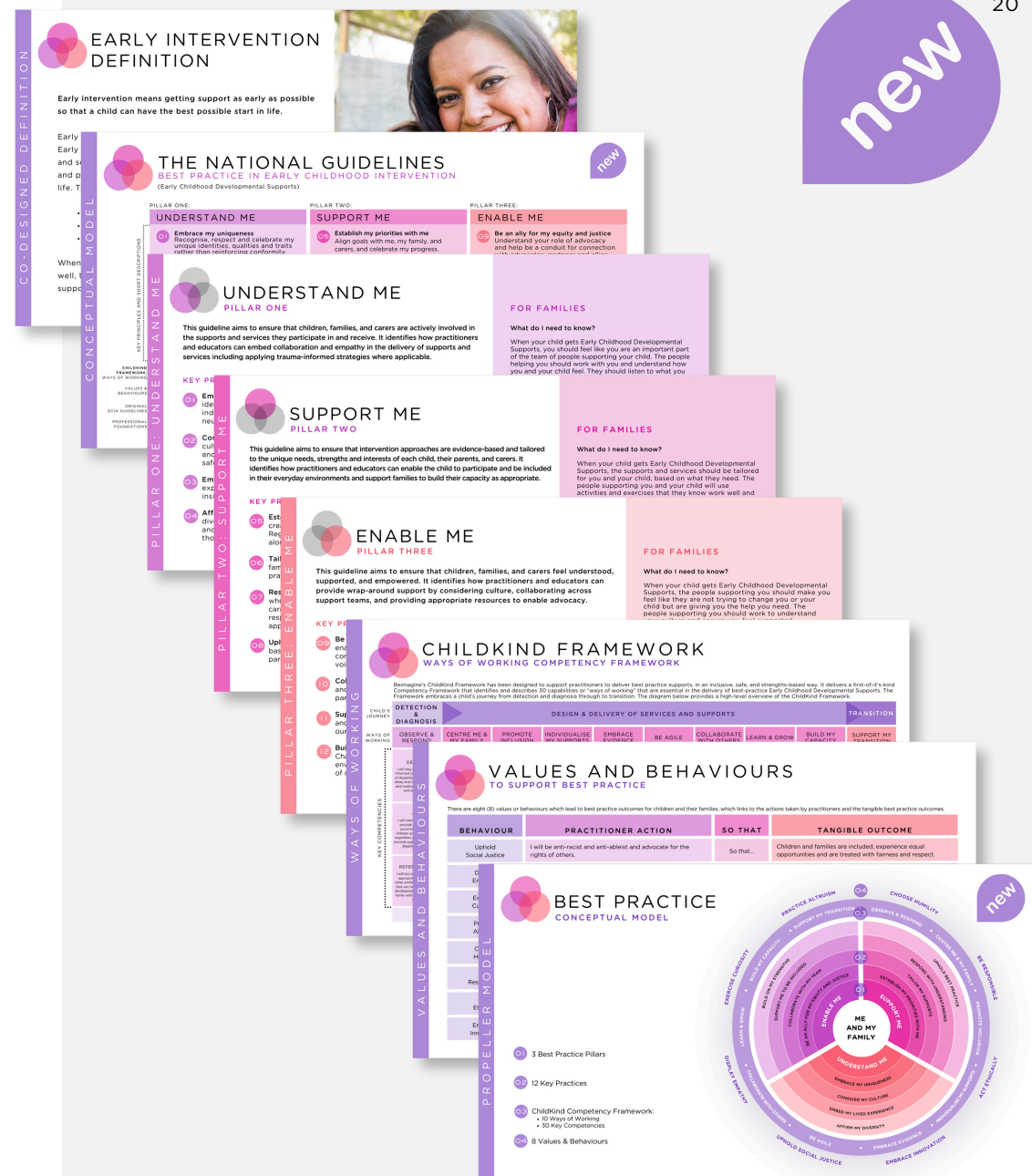
NEW GUIDELINES AND TOOLS

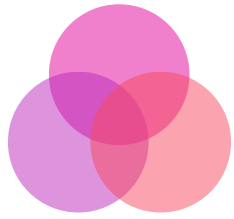
Reimagine is committed to supporting a best practice framework that reflects and responds to the perspectives and needs of children with disability, developmental delay and neurodivergence.

We are grateful for the partnership of so many parents, carers and practitioners, as well as the input from the disability justice movement to breathe this new guidance to life. This new toolkit, which will grow over time, includes:

- Updated National Guidelines for Best Practice (2nd Edition).
- Co-design Early Childhood Intervention Definition.
- Practical guidance on the new pillars of best practice - Understand Me, Support Me, Enable Me.
- Practitioner Values and Behaviours to support best practice.
- The ChildKind Best Practice Framework.

In addition this work has delivered our new co-designed inclusive Ages & Stages approach and our updated co-designed Sector Code of Ethics.





WHAT'S NEW?

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW GUIDELINES

The 2024 National Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention (2nd Edition) offers a fresh and evolved approach to supporting young children with disability, developmental delay, and neurodivergence, along with their families.

These guidelines represent years of co-design work with families and practitioners and embody an inclusive, evidence-based approach that sets a new standard in early childhood intervention.

The guidelines are structured around three key pillars: Understand Me, Support Me, and Enable Me.

Each of these pillars provides a foundational framework for delivering best practice supports, focusing on understanding the unique needs of each child, providing the right supports, and enabling them to thrive within their environments. These pillars align with the holistic, family-centred philosophy that must underpin all early childhood developmental supports, ensuring that children, and their families, are treated with respect, care, and individualised attention.

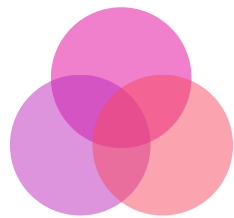
Supporting the pillars are the 10 Ways of Working, which form the basis of the new ChildKind Best Practice Framework and provide a practical approach for practitioners to apply best practice within their everyday practice. These are complemented by 8 core values and behaviours, which emphasise the importance of respect, inclusion, and collaboration in working with young children and their families.

All of the elements of the new best practice guidelines underpin our ChildKind Best Practice Framework, a comprehensive model for early childhood practitioners, designed to ensure consistency and continuity in the services and supports children receive across all systems. The ChildKind framework aims to create seamless integration across sectors, aligning competency and fostering collaboration between families, early childhood professionals, healthcare providers, and social services to achieve the best outcomes for every child.

All of the elements of the new best practice guidance come together in a conceptual model, known as the Propeller Model, which visually illustrates how each component of the guidelines drives and supports best practice. The Propeller Model emphasises the dynamic and interconnected nature of the guidance, highlighting how the pillars, ways of working, values, and behaviours operate in unison to propel positive outcomes for children and their families.

Through this new suite of guidance, Reimagine Australia has provided a significant foundation for the future of early childhood developmental supports - one that is holistic, inclusive, ever-evolving and that has been built upon years of collaboration and lived experience.

Note: For detailed information about the ChildKind Best Practice Framework, the Ten Ways of Working, and 30 Key Competencies, please see Reimagine Australia's "ChildKind Best Practice Framework" document, or go to childkind.org.au.



EARLY INTERVENTION

DEFINITION

Early intervention means getting support as early as possible so that a child can have the best possible start in life.

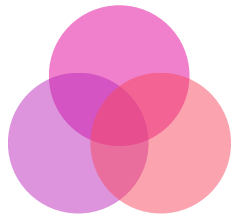
Early Childhood Developmental Supports (also known as Early Childhood Intervention or ECI) refers to the supports and services that a child, and their family and carers, receive and participate in within the first eight years of the child's life. These services aim to promote the:

- Child's development
- Family and child's wellbeing
- Child taking part in their community

When Early Childhood Developmental Supports are delivered well, the supports and services will work to understand, support and enable the child and their family and carers.

Note: This definition was co-designed by parents and carers of children with disability, developmental delay, and neurodivergence, and the practitioners who support them, during a series of Best Practice co-design workshops held from April to July 2024.

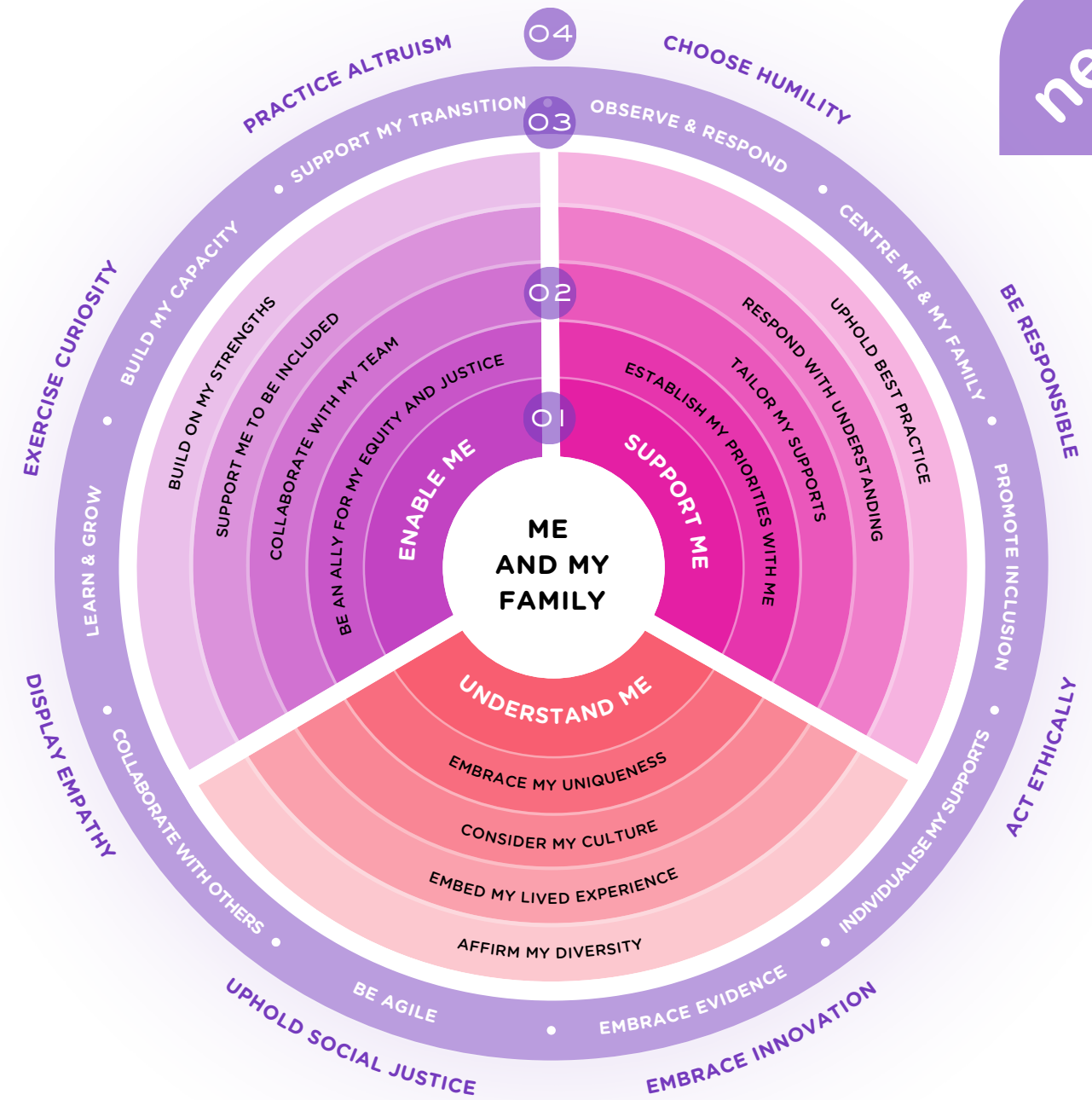


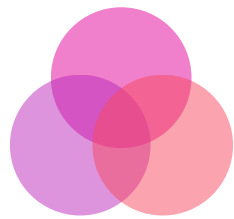


BEST PRACTICE CONCEPTUAL MODEL



- 01 3 Best Practice Pillars
- 02 12 Key Practices
- 03 ChildKind Best Practice Framework:
 - 10 Ways of Working
 - 30 Key Competencies
- 04 8 Values & Behaviours





THE NATIONAL GUIDELINES

BEST PRACTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION (2ND EDITION)

(Early Childhood Developmental Supports)



PILLAR ONE:

UNDERSTAND ME

- 01 Embrace my uniqueness**
Recognise, respect and celebrate my unique identities, qualities and traits rather than reinforcing conformity.
- 02 Consider my culture**
Think and act in ways that are considerate of my unique cultural and social experiences.
- 03 Embed my lived experiences**
Ensure that my unique perspectives and experiences, as well as those of my family and carers, inform decision making.
- 04 Affirm my diversity**
Understand that there is diversity in needs and abilities and challenge biases and misconceptions.

PILLAR TWO:

SUPPORT ME

- 05 Establish my priorities with me**
Align goals with me, my family, and carers, and celebrate my progress.
- 06 Tailor my supports**
Adapt supports to my unique context, as well as those of my family and carers.
- 07 Respond with understanding**
Embed trauma-informed and responsive care within my support.
- 08 Uphold best practice**
Respect my rights and dignity by aligning your behaviours and interactions with best practice.

PILLAR THREE:

ENABLE ME

- 09 Be an ally for my equity and justice**
Understand your role of advocacy and help be a conduit for connection with advocates, partners and allies.
- 10 Collaborate with my team**
Build and nurture my relationships to develop a cohesive dynamic support team around me.
- 11 Support me to be included**
Enable me to interact and participate in my life and community.
- 12 Build on my strengths**
Recognise and focus on my abilities, knowledge and capacity, as well as that of my family and carers.

CHILDKIND
FRAMEWORK:
WAYS OF WORKING

OBSERVE AND RESPOND • CENTRE ME AND MY FAMILY • PROMOTE INCLUSION • INDIVIDUALISE MY SUPPORTS • EMBRACE EVIDENCE
BE AGILE • COLLABORATE WITH OTHERS • LEARN AND GROW • BUILD MY CAPACITY • SUPPORT MY TRANSITION

VALUES &
BEHAVIOURS

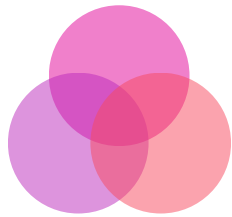
SOCIAL JUSTICE • EMPATHY • CURIOSITY • ALTRUISM • HUMILITY • RESPONSIBLE • ETHICAL • INNOVATION

ORIGINAL
ECIA GUIDELINES

2016 NATIONAL GUIDELINES: BEST PRACTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION (1ST EDITION)

PROFESSIONAL
FOUNDATIONS

NESTLES ONTO EXISTING SPECIALISED PROFESSIONAL SCOPE OF PRACTICE, INCLUDING ETHICAL & LEGAL REQUIREMENTS



THE NEW GUIDELINES

BREAKING THEM DOWN

THE “WHY” Best Practice Guidelines

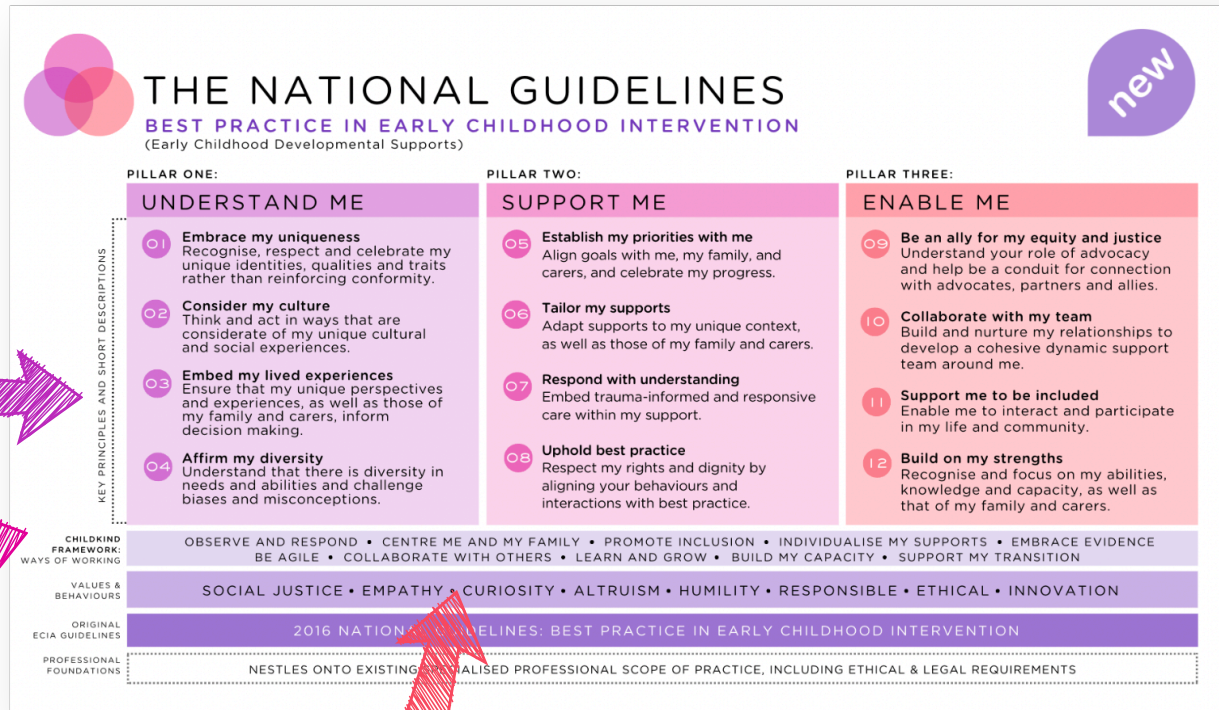
The 3 pillars and 12 key principles define the desired experiential outcomes of best practice early childhood developmental supports.

Best practice within the sector is critical because it ensures that children, and their families and carers, are understood, supported and enabled to have the best possible outcomes.

THE “HOW” Ways of Working

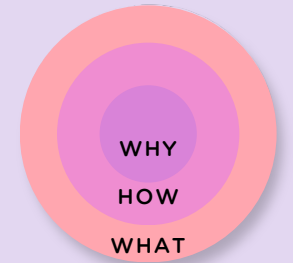
The 10 ways of working define the actions that need to be taken by practitioners to achieve the ‘why’. The ways of working are further fleshed out within the CHILDKIND Best Practice “Ways of Working” Framework.

This Framework includes a practitioner competency framework, to enable everyone who works with young developing children in need to support to assess and improve their skillset.



THE “WHAT” Values and Behaviours

The 8 values and behaviours, which will be further built upon in the CHILDKIND Best Practice Framework define the practitioner attitudes or perspectives that underpin best practice delivery of early childhood developmental supports.



WHY HOW WHAT MODEL

The Why How What model, also known as the Golden Circle Theory, proved to be an ideal tool for conceptually reframing the national guidelines, and clearly aligning best practices with actionable strategies and values.

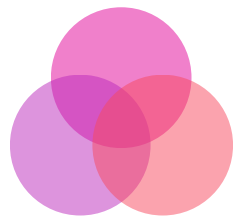
By defining their purpose (WHY); outlining the methods to achieve that purpose (HOW); and detailing the specific actions or standards to be followed (WHAT)

The WHY focuses on the critical importance of best practice guidelines, ensuring children and families achieve optimal outcomes.

The HOW provides clear, actionable ways of working, guiding practitioners to deliver these outcomes effectively.

The WHAT defines the values and behaviors that underpin best practice, ensuring consistency and integrity in service delivery.

This structured approach ensures that all aspects of guidelines are aligned for maximum impact.



CHILDKINDTM WAYS OF WORKING

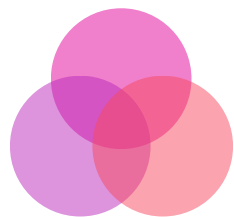
TO SUPPORT BEST PRACTICE



The Guidelines are supported by 10 ways of working that define the actions that need to be taken by practitioners to ensure children and families achieve optimal outcomes.

WAYS OF WORKING		WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION
DETECTION AND DIAGNOSIS DESIGN & DELIVERY OF SERVICES AND SUPPORTS THE CHILD'S JOURNEY TRANSITION	Observe and Respond	Promptly addressing children's and families' needs by adapting strategies to support their well-being and development.
	Centre Me and My Family	Ensuring needs, values, and perspectives are prioritised, fostering a supportive and collaborative environment.
	Promote Inclusion	Adapting practices to ensure all children and families feel valued, supported, and fully integrated into their communities.
	Individualise My Supports	Customising services and strategies to meet my unique needs, preferences, and goals.
	Embrace Evidence	Utilising research-based practices to ensure the most effective and relevant supports for children and families.
	Be Agile	Swiftly adapting to changing needs and circumstances to provide timely and effective support.
	Collaborate with Others	Working together with families, professionals, and communities to create cohesive and comprehensive support for children's development and well-being.
	Learn and Grow	Continuously enhancing knowledge and skills to provide the best support for children and families.
	Build My Capacity	Developing skills, knowledge, and resources to enhance effectiveness and support for children and families.
	Support My Transition	Providing tailored guidance and resources to ensure a smooth adjustment and continued development.





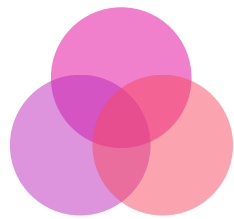
VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

TO SUPPORT BEST PRACTICE



There are eight (8) values or behaviours which lead to best practice outcomes for children and their families, which link to the actions taken by practitioners and the tangible best practice outcomes.

BEHAVIOUR	PRACTITIONER ACTION	SO THAT	TANGIBLE OUTCOME
Uphold Social Justice	I will be anti-racist and anti-ableist and advocate for the rights of others.	So that...	Children and families are included, experience equal opportunities and are treated with fairness and respect.
Display Empathy	I will take into account the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of others.	So that...	Children and families feel understood, valued, and supported in a compassionate environment.
Exercise Curiosity	I will exercise curiosity without judgment by seeking answers through asking questions in a sensitive manner.	So that...	Children and families benefit from a well-rounded understanding of themselves that leads to thoughtful decision making.
Practice Altruism	I will assist others in need without expecting any rewards.	So that...	Children and families experience a community of kindness and support, where people help each other selflessly.
Choose Humility	I will show grace by acknowledging and valuing the strengths and areas for improvement in myself and others.	So that...	Children and families feel appreciated and empowered to embrace their unique perspectives and abilities.
Be Responsible	I will be accountable and accept the outcomes of my actions and inactions.	So that...	Children and families can trust and rely on me, knowing that I am accountable and dependable.
Act Ethically	I will act with integrity, honesty and fairness.	So that...	Children and families can be confident that my actions are just, principled, and in their best interest.
Embrace Innovation	I will embrace new ideas and approaches based on evidence to create positive change and social impact.	So that...	Children and families can benefit from innovative solutions, improved services, and better support.

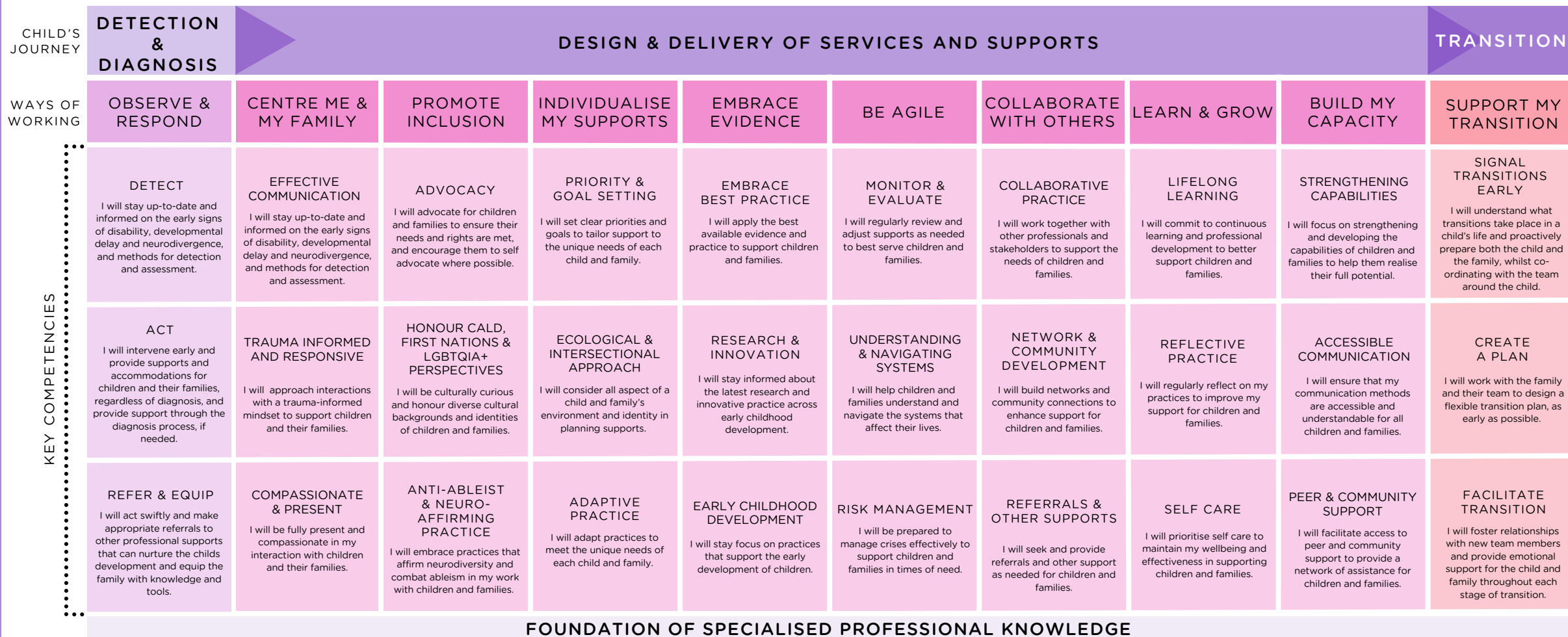


CHILDKINDTM BEST PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

WAYS OF WORKING AND KEY COMPETENCIES

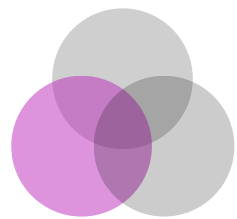


Reimagine's ChildKind Best Practice Framework has been designed to support practitioners to deliver best practice, in an inclusive, safe, and strengths-based way. It delivers a first-of-its-kind competency framework that identifies and describes 30 capabilities, based on 10 "ways of working" that are essential in the delivery of best-practice Early Childhood Developmental Supports. The Framework embraces a child's journey from detection and diagnosis through to transition. The diagram below provides a high-level overview of the ChildKind Framework.





03: THE BEST PRACTICE PILLARS EXPLAINED



UNDERSTAND ME

PILLAR ONE

This guideline aims to ensure that children, families, and carers are actively involved in the supports and services they participate in and receive. It identifies how practitioners and educators can embed collaboration and empathy in the delivery of supports and services including applying trauma-informed strategies where applicable.

KEY PRACTICES:

- O1 Embrace my uniqueness:** Recognise and celebrate my unique identities and traits instead of enforcing conformity. Embrace my individuality and create an environment that honours my neurodiversity and personal differences.
- O2 Consider my culture:** Think and act with consideration for my unique cultural and social experiences, including if I come from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) or First Nations background. Build safe and meaningful relationships with me and my family or carers.
- O3 Embed my lived experiences:** Listen to and value my unique experiences, as well as those of my parents or carers. Use these insights to guide decisions affecting my life and care.
- O4 Affirm my diversity:** Understand that my needs and abilities are diverse. Challenge biases and misconceptions about me. Recognise and build upon my strengths, interests, and capabilities, as well as those of my parents or carers.



FOR FAMILIES

What do I need to know?

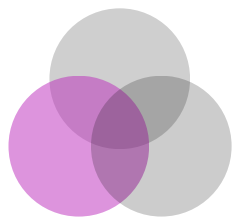
When your child gets early childhood developmental supports, you should feel like you are an important part of the team of people supporting your child. The people helping you should work with you and understand how you and your child feel. They should listen to what you and your child think and feel about the help you get, and what you want to achieve.

What should I expect?

- The people supporting you will be open to listening to you talk about your life, thoughts, and feelings.
- The people supporting you will help you and your child to set and reach goals so your child can join in more activities at home, school, or in your community.

What can I do?

- Tell the people supporting you what is important to you when they are making decisions.
- Think about what your child likes doing, and what you would like to do. Tell the people supporting you about these things.
- If you have had a hard time and would like help, you can tell anyone who is supporting you and they will make sure you get the help you want.



WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION

FOR PRACTITIONERS



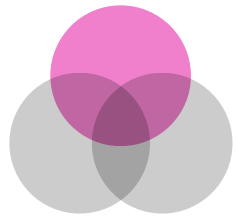
Assessment and Individualisation: Understand the individual strengths, needs, social and cultural context, and preferences of the child, their family, and carers by using a range of inputs including assessments, observations and lived experience. Develop personalised plans that are tailored to address their specific circumstances and support holistic well-being.

Embrace diverse abilities: Understand and celebrate the varied abilities of all individuals. Offer accessible resources and culturally appropriate activities to ensure everyone can fully participate. Challenge your own assumptions and foster an environment that values everyone's unique contributions to the relationship, support, and perspectives.

Cultivate Mutual Respect and Understanding: Build relationships based on mutual respect, trust, and empathy. Prioritise psychological safety and understand that children, parents, and carers are the experts of their experience.

Cultural Curiosity and Responsiveness: Engage in cultural responsiveness training, challenge assumptions, and address unconscious biases to enhance understanding and respect for diverse cultural backgrounds. Understand that individuals have different relationships with their culture and engage in ongoing dialogue to learn from and honour diverse cultural perspectives and experiences of children, families, and carers. Incorporate this understanding into supports and services to ensure they are culturally responsive and respectful.

Ethical practice and reflection: Adhere to ethical guidelines and professional standards in all aspects of practice. Engage in critical reflection on a regular basis and seek feedback from colleagues, the child and their parents and carers to ensure continuous improvement.



SUPPORT ME

PILLAR TWO

This guideline aims to ensure that intervention approaches are evidence-based and tailored to the unique needs, strengths and interests of each child, their parents, and carers. It identifies how practitioners and educators can enable the child to participate and be included in their everyday environments and support families to build their capacity as appropriate.

KEY PRACTICES:

- 05 Establish my priorities with me:** Work with me, my family and carers to create achievable goals that align with my unique needs and aspirations. Regularly review and adjust these goals with me, celebrating my successes along the way.
- 06 Tailor my supports:** Tailor supports to fit my specific needs and those of my family and carers. Consider our culture, living situation, and daily life to create practical solutions that work for us, and that we can adapt over time.
- 07 Respond with understanding:** Consider my potential trauma experiences when providing me with support and services, connecting me, my family, and carers with trauma-specific resources when appropriate. Understand that my response to trauma may be unique and use this insight to tailor your approach to my individual needs and circumstances.
- 08 Uphold best practice:** Uphold the ChildKind Best Practice Ways of Working and Values and Behaviours, use evidence-based supports, and respect my rights and dignity, as well as those of my parents and carers, when delivering supports and services to me.



FOR FAMILIES

What do I need to know?

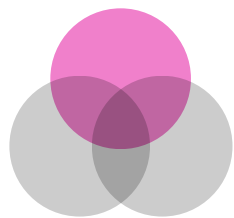
When your child gets early childhood developmental supports, the supports and services should be tailored for you and your child, based on what they need. The people supporting you and your child will use activities and exercises that they know work well and that will help your child to do the things they want and have to do. You will also have the opportunity to learn about how you can further support your child.

What should I expect?

- The support your child gets should be tailored for them and help them join in more activities every day.
- The people supporting you should celebrate your child's wins and make your child feel good about being themselves.

What can I do?

- Tell the people helping you what your child likes, what they are good at and potential areas for development.
- Ask as many questions as you like and learn more about how to get the support you need and how to best support your child.



WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION

FOR PRACTITIONERS

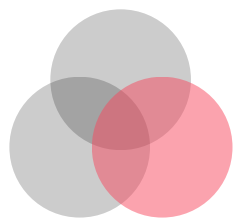


Goal setting best practices: Establish clear, achievable goals in collaboration with the child, their parents and carers that reflect individual needs and aspirations when developing support plans. Establish goals with everyone in the child's support team, and regularly review progress, celebrating successes and adapting goals as necessary to ensure continued progress.

Trauma-informed and restorative care: Ensure that you are skilled in recognising signs of trauma in children, parents and carers and provide connection to relevant services when appropriate. Pursue training and upskilling opportunities related to trauma and trauma responsiveness, share learnings across teams and encourage others to upskill. Create a safe and supportive environment that promotes empowerment, healing, and resilience.

Strengths-based approach: Identify and celebrate the unique strengths, interests and abilities of each child and their parents and carers. Build supports that enhance these strengths to enable growth and development. This may include the provision of coaching and capacity building services for families and carers as appropriate.

Evidence-based approaches: Use approaches that are supported by evidence and ensure that supports and services are best suited for the individual needs and goals of children, parents, and carers. Regularly review and update supports and services based on what is working well from the perspective of the child, and their families and carers, and the latest research and evidence available.



ENABLE ME

PILLAR THREE

This guideline aims to ensure that children, families, and carers feel understood, supported, and empowered. It identifies how practitioners and educators can provide wrap-around support by considering culture, collaborating across support teams, and providing appropriate resources to enable advocacy.

KEY PRACTICES:

- 09 **Be an ally for my equity and justice:** Understand the role of advocacy in enabling equity and justice for me. Support me, my family, and carers to connect with advocates, partners, and allies who can help amplify our voices and ensure our rights are protected.
- 10 **Collaborate with my multidisciplinary team:** Build a supportive, inclusive, and diverse team environment centered around my needs and those of my parents and carers.
- 11 **Support me to be included:** Support me, my family, and carers to interact and be more involved within our everyday environments in alignment with our goals and interests.
- 12 **Build on my strengths:** Understand that my skills and abilities are varied. Challenge assumptions and misconceptions about my disability. Create an environment that supports my diverse needs and abilities, as well as those of my family and carers.



FOR FAMILIES

What do I need to know?

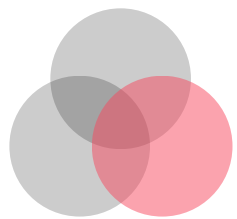
When your child gets early childhood developmental supports, the people supporting you should make you feel like they are not trying to change you or your child but are giving you the help you need. The people supporting you should work to understand your culture and ensure you feel supported.

What should I expect?

- The people supporting you should ask about your culture and be respectful.
- The people supporting you will work as a team so that you feel consistently supported.
- The people supporting you will support you to communicate about what is best for you and your child and will speak up on your behalf if you are unable to.

What can I do?

- Tell the people helping you about your culture and your experiences and thoughts about disability.
- Ask the people supporting you to speak up on your behalf about what is best for you and your child.



WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN ACTION

FOR PRACTITIONERS



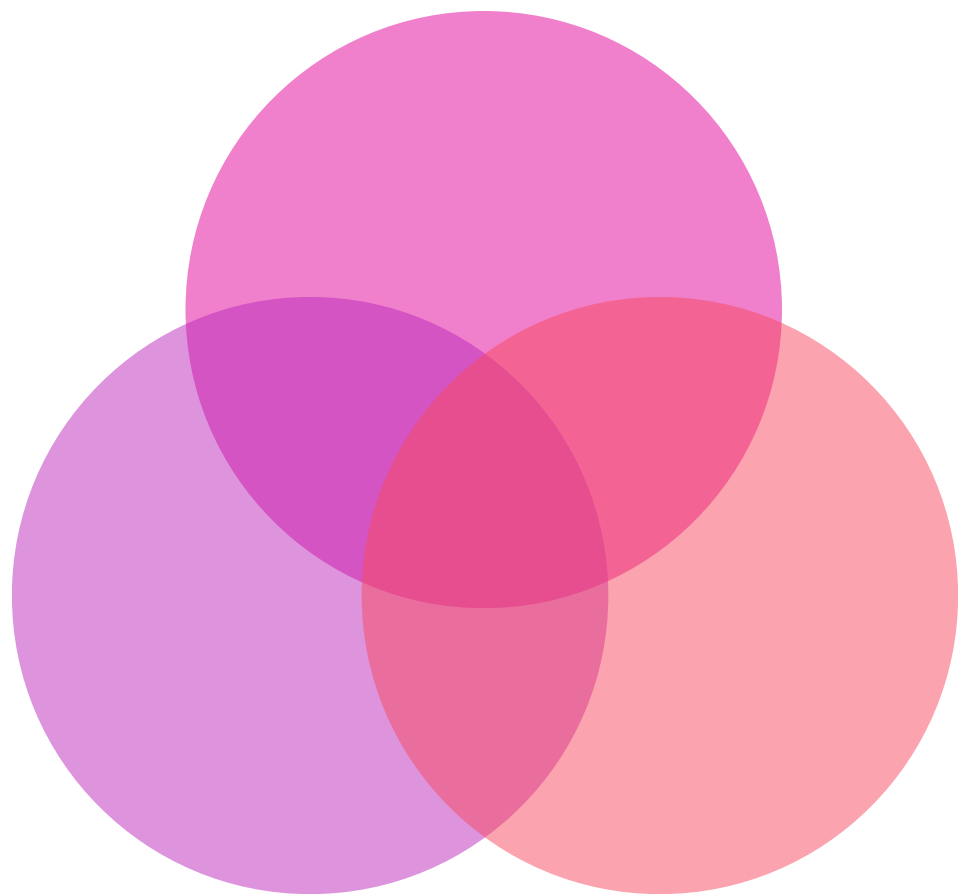
Home, school, and community inclusion: Support children, parents, and carers to engage and participate within their everyday environments such as the home, early education and care, school, or community settings to promote generalisation of skills; meaningful participation in daily activities; and engagement with peers and friends.

Family-centred practice: Maintain open, empathetic communication with the child, parents, carers, and community, valuing their insights as essential contributors to the support team. Empower and support parents and carers to make decisions for their child and step in and support when they are unable to make these decisions. Create environments which emphasise collaborative partnership and support the child, parents, and carers to express their thoughts and preferences.

Anti-ableist and neuro-affirming practice: Challenge stereotypes and misconceptions about disabilities and neurodivergence. Create inclusive environments that celebrate and accommodate the diverse abilities, needs and goals of all children to enable meaningful participation.

Collaborative support team: Recognise that children, their parents, and carers are supported by multidisciplinary professionals and prioritise building a cohesive, dynamic support team around the child. Facilitate regular team meetings, and promote open communication, mutual respect, and shared decision-making to enable the child, family, and carers to feel supported and to reach their goals.

Advocacy and empowerment: Advocate for the rights and needs of children and parents and carers within the community and broader systems. Empower children, parents, and carers to be their own advocates. Play an active role in providing access to resources and support as appropriate.



REIMAGINE
AUSTRALIA