

**INQUIRY INTO TRANSITION SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS  
WITH ADDITIONAL OR COMPLEX NEEDS AND THEIR  
FAMILIES**

**Organisation:** Early Childhood Intervention Australia (NSW Chapter) Inc.

**Date received:** 30/08/2011

---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to transitions for young children.....	2
The adequacy and accessibility of appropriate support for children and their families.....	4
Supports by early childhood intervention and/or mainstream early childhood education services...4	
Supports from schools during enrolment and beginning school.....	5
Support funding for children when they begin school.....	7
Best practice approaches to ensure seamless and streamlined assistance during transitions.....	8
Recommendations.....	8
Conclusion.....	11
Appendix 1: ECIA NSW Position Statement on Inclusion.....	12
Appendix 2: Early childhood intervention (ECI) services in NSW.....	14
Appendix 3: Main service funding sources in NSW to support young children with disabilities.....	15

# **Submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into transition support for students with additional or complex needs and their families**



Compiled from information provided by ECIA NSW members by:

Kate McNamara

*Policy and Project Officer*

&

Rosemary Flavel

*Executive Officer*

Early Childhood Intervention Australia (NSW Chapter) Inc.

Early Childhood Intervention Australia (NSW Chapter) Inc. is the peak statewide organisation promoting the interests of young children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families.

ECIA NSW endorses practices that promote, encourage and support community inclusion for all children and their families. These lay the foundation for each individual's successful participation as a valued member within our diverse community. As an organisation, we have adopted a Position Statement on *Inclusion* (see Appendix 1 – pp.12-13), which makes particular reference to the early childhood years, but is also applicable to children with disabilities once they attend school.

The majority of our members are professionals working in the field of early childhood intervention (ECI), either as part of a disability-focussed service, or within mainstream early childhood education (ECE). Their backgrounds are generally in early education / special education, or allied health (speech pathology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, psychology, family support); and they are based in urban, rural and regional centres throughout NSW.

A significant part of the ECI / ECE professional's role is assisting in children's transition to school, including collaborative planning with families and schools to meet the children's support needs in the classroom. Despite their diverse employment contexts and geographical locations, many of our members' experiences in supporting families to negotiate the school sector to secure a quality education for their children are quite similar.

*For a description of the role and general activities of ECI services, please see Appendix 2 – p.14.*

## **Transitions for young children with disabilities and developmental delays**

For this age group, the key educational transition is the move into school, whether from a formal prior-to-school setting, or simply from home. This can be an extended and complex process, both for children and their families. Early childhood intervention services, particularly, but also well-supported mainstream early childhood centres, frequently play a significant role in supporting young children and their families during this time of transition.

Most young children with disabilities and delays attend mainstream early childhood (ECE) services (preschools or child care) during their prior-to-school years. In addition, they and their families generally receive specialist support from early childhood intervention (ECI) services, the majority of which are community-based NGOs. Staff from these ECI services

provide significant levels of targeted consultative support within mainstream early childhood centres, providing much-needed specialist supplementation of the State or Commonwealth-funded support provisions available within preschools or child care.

***The key elements contributed by early childhood intervention and well-supported mainstream early childhood education services to the transition process:***

- 1.1 Explicit teaching of the skills that will assist the child in making this major transition.
- 1.2 Development of assistive resources, tailored to the child's needs, that will enable them to participate more readily in a school environment (e.g. communication aids).
- 1.3 Helping families prepare for what can be a very big step for them.
- 1.4 Assisting them in their consideration of school options that will best meet the needs of their child and family.
- 1.5 Providing family-requested support with the school enrolment application, including professional reports regarding the child's strengths and support needs.
- 1.6 Assisting families, if requested, in liaising with school personnel (including attendance at transition planning meetings).
- 1.7 Supporting the child and family during any orientation sessions at their chosen school.
- 1.8 Where funding allows, offering practical consultative support during the initial period of the child's enrolment in Kindergarten.

***The general expectations of families and the ECI / ECE sector of the role of schools in supporting the transition process are:***

- 2.1 Welcome a family's initial enquiry and provide all necessary information and assistance to facilitate the enrolment of the child in the school of the family's choice.
- 2.2 Gather relevant information about the child's strengths and needs from the family and through them, request reports from professionals who have key knowledge of the child's functional skills (and, if required for a disability-specific class placement, relevant diagnostic information).
- 2.3 Invite collaborative involvement in transition planning by all key parties identified by the family.
- 2.4 Make all the applications for support that are required to maximise the child's access to and participation in classroom and other school activities.
- 2.5 Keep the family fully informed of the progress of their enrolment application, including any associated support provisions that the school is responsible for organising, so that the child has full access to all classroom and other school activities as soon as they begin school.
- 2.6 Confirm the child's enrolment with the family well in advance of the school orientation programme commencing.
- 2.7 Negotiate a tailored orientation programme to take place in the final school term of the year before the child commences school.
- 2.8 Involve the child's proposed Kindergarten teacher in the transition planning process, if at all possible.
- 2.9 Ensure the classroom teacher is fully informed of the child's reported strengths and support needs prior to their commencement.

## **1. The adequacy and accessibility of appropriate support for children and their families**

There are significant equity issues in relation to the adequacy and accessibility of supports. The following reflect those that are available to children and families who receive regular services from either early childhood intervention (ECI) organisations and/or who attend well-supported preschool or child care programmes. Unfortunately, as a result of funding constraints, geographical isolation and availability of professional staff, there are other children and families who remain on waiting lists for ECI programmes (or who receive only very limited services) prior to beginning school. There is also a significant minority of young children with disabilities who do not attend preschool or child care, are offered very reduced session enrolments, or receive poor or limited support within that environment.

### ***Supports provided by early childhood intervention (ECI) and/or mainstream early childhood education (ECE) services:***

#### *1.1 Explicit teaching of the skills that will assist the child in making this major transition*

- For those children accessing ECI and well-supported ECE services, emphasis on the development of practical skills in preparation for school, is a strong focus.
- Families are guided through specific strategies that they can use in everyday activities to further enhance the development of these skills in their child.

#### *1.2 Development of assistive resources, tailored to the child's needs, that will enable them to participate more readily in a school environment (e.g. communication aids).*

- As part of their intervention programmes with young children with disabilities, ECI services develop individualised equipment and other practical resources that assist children and their families function as effectively as possible within their home and the wider community.
- During the extended transition preparation period, there is a particular focus on developing and trialling what will best assist the child to be a full participant in all the activities undertaken by their peers at school.

#### *1.3 Helping families prepare for what can be a very big step for them*

- Most families report some anxieties about their child starting school, but for those whose child has a disability, this can be an especially challenging time.
- For those with links to ECI and well-supported ECE services, there is generally a focus on providing information to families about what is involved in "going to school", both for them and their child. Within the family-centred approach generally offered in the ECI sector, families are well-supported in identifying and addressing the particular issues that are concerning them about their child starting school.

#### *1.4 Assisting them in their consideration of school options that will best meet the needs of their child and family*

- Staff in ECI and many ECE services are often well-equipped to provide families with initial information about the range of school options available to them, after hearing from families what they would ideally like for their child. They are also generally able to provide families with key contact information for each of the school sectors and explain the general enrolment process and its likely requirements.

#### *1.5 Providing family-requested support with the school enrolment application, including professional reports regarding the child's strengths and support needs*

- This is a standard part of the role of ECI services. They have a good deal of experience in assisting families through the enrolment process and know the particular information generally requested when a child has additional needs. Their professional reports

typically include detailed functional information, as well as more formal assessments, if appropriate.

- Staff in well-supported preschools and child care centres may also be familiar with the types of information often requested during enrolment, and can provide reports on the child's observed strengths and needs within the early childhood education environment.

*1.6 Assisting families, if requested, in liaising with school personnel (including attendance at transition planning meetings)*

- This is another standard undertaking by ECI service staff and in some cases, those from preschools and child care.

*1.7 Supporting the child and family during any orientation sessions at their chosen school*

- Where schools welcome their involvement, ECI services would generally make this an integral component of targeted skills development for the child. Their support to the family might include giving assistance in deciding on, and negotiating an orientation programme that will best meet the needs of the child and family.
- This is much less commonly part of the role undertaken by preschools or child care centres.

*1.8 Where funding allows, offering practical consultative support during the initial period of the child's enrolment in Kindergarten.*

- ECI services have significant experience in supporting children in mainstream preschools and child care, and so have much to offer schools during the child's first year at school.
- Many attempt to provide at least a one-off school visit and/or consultative phone call early in the first term of the child's enrolment, but neither of the 2 main funding sources for these services (ADHC core funding and DEC's ISP: see *Appendix 3 – p.15*) makes provision even for this level of support – and there is certainly not a universally funded option to provide the more substantial level of consultation that could make a significant difference to children, their families and school personnel.

**Supports from schools during enrolment and beginning school:**

*2.1 Provide information and assistance to families to facilitate the enrolment of the child in the school of the family's choice*

- In some cases, this process proceeds smoothly and is sensitive to the family's wishes. However, there are also quite frequent examples of subtle (or not so subtle) pressures placed on families in an attempt to 'encourage' them to opt for a school option that is not of their choice. (This is commonly in the direction of a less inclusive option).
- Attitudes within the school system towards the enrolment of children with disabilities and delays within inclusive classrooms are still very variable, despite policies which support families' right to exercise their choice of school.

**Case study of one family's experience:**

*Their first choice for their child was to attend the local Catholic school with her sibling. An application to the school was not successful. Their second choice was an autism-specific satellite class, but it had a two year waiting list. The third choice was the local public school. This school applied pressure for the family to send the child to a support class for children with an intellectual disability instead, which gave the message that they was unable to meet the child's needs. The family felt let down by both school systems. Eventually, they secured the support class placement, while waiting for a vacancy in the autism-specific class.*

- If school principals are positive and welcoming of all children to their school, and have confidence in the ability of their teaching staff to accommodate a diversity of educational

needs, this makes an enormous difference to families, both when seeking enrolment, and for their child's continuing attendance at that school. It is also a significant contributor to positive educational and social outcomes for the child.

*2.2 Gather relevant information about the child's strengths and needs from the family and through them, request reports from professionals who have key knowledge of the child's functional skills (and, if required for a disability-specific class placement, relevant diagnostic information)*

- When schools are well-informed about the appropriate policies and procedures for supporting the enrolment of a child with a disability or delay, and are welcoming of their enrolment, this part of the process can work quite well and in a relatively straightforward way.
- In an attempt to base funding allocations on the child's actual support needs and not just a disability category, NSW DEC's enrolment procedure for children with disabilities includes the completion of a form which requests ratings be provided across a range of functional skills. While in principle this has merit, the rating categories are broad (and essentially deficit-focussed), so are often not able to accurately reflect an individual child's specific strengths and needs, and are therefore of questionable assistance in educational programming. In addition, there remains considerable pressure in many school regions for an IQ assessment to form part of the enrolment application, despite this not being an obligatory requirement.
- This emphasis during the enrolment process on the deficits associated with the child's disability can be especially stressful for families, as there is a sense of "pass or fail" about the whole process – and a constant focus on having to highlight what the child can't do as a means of accessing adequate support funds.

*2.3 Invite collaborative involvement in transition planning by all key parties identified by the family*

- This is especially important as a support mechanism for families through their own major transition when their children are starting school. They have generally been well-supported in the highly family-centred ECI service system, so it can be an especially difficult time for them when a similar level of support and consultation is no longer offered.

*This is well-illustrated in a comment from a parent describing the transition to school as: "being cast adrift with neither supports nor services – it was a very alienating process".*

*2.4 Make all the applications for support that are required to maximise the child's access to and participation in classroom and other school activities.*

- This process can be a complex one and it is not uncommon for delays to occur in providing all that is needed, so that all is not in place before the child has started school. The level of support actually received can also often be less than ideal. See the additional discussion of funding and support issues following point 2.9 below.

*2.5 Keep the family fully informed of the progress of their enrolment application, including any associated support provisions that the school is responsible for organising, so that the child has full access to all classroom and other school activities as soon as they begin school*

*2.6 Confirm the child's enrolment with the family well in advance of the school orientation programme commencing*

*2.7 Negotiate a tailored orientation programme to take place in the final school term of the year before the child commences school*

- The above can all work well in some instances, but unfortunately, a common additional stress for families is the delay that can occur in the confirmation of their child's

enrolment at a particular school and notification of the level of support that will be available to them.

- As well as being very unsettling for families, this is a major issue in the process of preparing the child for going to school, given the need for all young school starters both to familiarise themselves with their future school environment through school-based orientation programmes, and to be able to arrive at school with all the required supports in place.
- Orientation programmes are especially critical for many children with additional learning needs, so it is far from best educational practice when they miss this important opportunity – or undertake it at a school in which they might not eventually be enrolled.
- Adequate supports are also essential if the child is to have equity of access to the full range of classroom activities.

#### *2.8 Involve the child's proposed Kindergarten teacher in the transition planning process, if at all possible*

- Unfortunately, this is very rare, despite the evident advantages in having such a key person well-informed about the child's particular strengths and needs in advance of the child starting school.
- It would also assist greatly in supporting both the child and family in making the major transition from the very familiar and individualised environment of early childhood intervention to school.

#### *2.9 Ensure the classroom teacher is fully informed of the child's reported strengths and support needs prior to their commencement*

- For all the reasons outlined in 2.7 above, this should be regarded as essential, but unfortunately even this level of preparation is not always put in place. It is not uncommon for the classroom teacher not to have seen the reports that have been provided as part of the child's enrolment application

### **Support funding for children when they begin school**

All involved in supporting the education of children with additional needs would acknowledge the deficits and inequities in funding and support levels available within the school system. Some of the issues include:

- Children who have been deemed in need of funding support within the early childhood education sector may no longer qualify for such support when they transition to school, which would appear to be a major anomaly – especially given the self-evidently greater challenges a school environment may present. This group can include those with severe delays in their communication, as well as children with mild intellectual disabilities (who generally do not qualify for additional targeted funding at all when they begin school).
- There is little or no transparency in how the available funds are distributed, or in the way they are actually used to support an individual child's educational programme. This can result in children with apparently very similar learning profiles receiving quite different levels of support, depending on the school attended. The existing resources available within a school do not seem to be a significant consideration when making funding allocations.
- A number of ECI services have reported instances where, as a result of an individual school's determination that the funding allocated is insufficient for them to adequately support the child's learning needs, families have been asked either to not send their child to school full-time, or to make a significant financial contribution towards covering costs such as teacher's aide time (which actually may not be the only, or most appropriate mechanism to meet the child's particular needs, but it is frequently seen as the default requirement by many schools).
- The level of funding provided to resource the enrolment of a child in an inclusive, mainstream class is frequently quite limited and does not match the full per capita



infrastructure and staffing costs required to maintain a similar enrolment in a special school or support class. This can become a factor both in a family's choice of school for their child's enrolment – and in the recommendations made to them by school personnel, particularly when a child has significant support needs. As indicated earlier, all families should have the right to enrol their child in the school of their choice; and schools should feel sufficiently well-resourced with adequate funding levels and professional supports that allow them to offer appropriately individualised programmes to all their students.

## **2. Best practice approaches to ensure seamless and streamlined assistance during transitions**

A best practice transition to school model for a child with a disability or developmental delay is one which is focussed on their skills, abilities and needs, as well as good levels of information and support to their family. Collaboration and positive relationships between all concerned – children, parents and educators and a range of stakeholders – is the key to ensuring continuity for the child starting school. The programmes should be well-planned, effectively monitored, flexible and responsive to children's needs. (Sue Dockett and Bob Perry (2001) Starting School, Effective Transitions, *Early Childhood Research & Practice*, Volume 3, No 2)

ECIA NSW considers the best practice elements required for successful transition to school by a child with a disability or developmental delay are:

- Children are well-prepared and supported for the move to school
- Families are well-informed and supported before and during the whole process
- Schools (and particularly their principals) are welcoming of enrolments from children with disabilities
- Family choice of school is supported
- Schools work in partnership with families and prior-to-school services to support successful transition
- There are clearly defined and well-communicated timelines during the transition process, particularly in relation to providing timely information to families regarding their child's enrolment
- Assessment requirements are child and family-friendly, readily accessible by families, and functionally-focussed
- School-based teachers have well-developed skills for including and supporting children with a wide range of abilities
- Adequate funding is available to allow effective support during the whole transition process (including the first year at school)

**To support the widespread implementation of such best practices, ECIA NSW makes the following recommendations:**

### ***Children are well-prepared and supported for the move to school***

*Recommendation 1:* Well-funded, quality ECI and ECE services are available throughout NSW to all children with disabilities and delays and their families during the pre-school years.

*Recommendation 2:* ECI services be funded to continue their support to children during the first year at school.

*Recommendation 3:* There is a well-designed, individually-tailored orientation programme offered to all children with disabilities and delays. Where at all possible, this should involve the Kindergarten teacher whose class the child will be in the following year.

*Recommendation 4:* All required supports are in place when the child commences school. Where these involve physical modifications, this application process must be begun by the school many months in advance of the child's proposed enrolment date.

### ***Families are well-informed and supported before and during the whole process***

*Recommendation 5:* ECI / ECE services ensure that families are aware of the range of school options available to them, and are well-informed about the enrolment process.

*Recommendation 6:* ECI services to be funded to continue their support to families during their child's first year at school, so that the transition is a more gradual, rather than very abrupt process for them.

*Recommendation 7:* Schools provide clear, family-friendly information about the enrolment process and the supports that will be available for a child at school. This must accommodate the needs of a diversity of families, including those from Aboriginal and non-English-speaking backgrounds, as well as parents who may have learning difficulties.

*Recommendation 8:* Schools recognise families as the primary point of information regarding the child.

### ***Schools (and particularly their principals) are welcoming of enrolments from children with disabilities***

*Recommendation 9:* There be substantial awareness-raising amongst whole school communities of the importance of ensuring all children and their families to feel welcomed at the school of their choice – and the fact that inclusion is strongly supported by DEC.

*Recommendation 10:* Formal processes such as transition planning meetings be conducted in a way that reduces the possibility of families feeling intimidated (e.g. encourage families to bring family member/friend/other key person to offer support).

*Recommendation 11:* Schools have consistent and equitable enrolment and transition processes that ensure appropriate support for all children and families.

*Recommendation 12:* School Principals receive training about best practice transition and inclusive practice. As school leaders, principals have an especially influential role in the level of support and encouragement children and families receive.

### ***Family choice of school is supported***

*Recommendation 13:* Every effort must be made to accommodate the child in the family's first choice of school (including one that may be out of area, where that best meets the needs identified by the family).

*Recommendation 14:* Review the out-of-area “special circumstances” provisions to ensure these accommodate the particular issues that may be specific to children with additional and/or more complex needs.

***Schools work in partnership with families and prior-to-school services to support successful transition***

*Recommendation 15:* Schools (with family permission) actively seek and welcome the involvement of all who have key knowledge and experience of the child’s particular strengths and needs.

***There are clearly defined and well-communicated timelines during the transition process, particularly in relation to providing timely information to families regarding their child’s enrolment***

*Recommendation 16:* A consistent policy be developed that notification of school placement is provided to families well before the beginning of Term 4 in the year prior to commencing school. This is essential to allow for the implementation of a well-designed, individually-tailored orientation programme.

***Assessment requirements are child and family-friendly, readily accessible by families and functionally-focussed***

*Recommendation 17:* Increase awareness of school personnel that constant highlighting of the child’s deficits can be a distressing experience for families (particularly when they have been supported with a strengths-based model in ECI).

*Recommendation 18:* Review the inclusion support application guidelines to (1) reduce the focus on a child’s deficits rather than strengths; (2) increase the emphasis on functional skills; (3) ensure there is consistent awareness that a psychometric assessment is not an absolute requirement for the child’s enrolment and/or receipt of support; (4) acknowledge the difficulties families may have (especially in rural & regional areas) in accessing formal assessments (availability, cost, waiting lists, etc.).

*Recommendation 19:* Where assessments are undertaken by school-based personnel, that they have relevant skills and experience with young children.

***School-based teachers have well-developed skills for including and supporting children with a wide range of abilities***

*Recommendation 20:* Sufficient funding and resources are available to address teacher training and support needs in relation to the inclusion of children with a disability or developmental delay into mainstream settings.

*Recommendation 21:* Implement the recommendations of the evaluation of the 2010 School Learning Support Programme trial and extend this to all schools in NSW i.e. allocate a specialist teacher to support classroom teachers in addressing the learning needs of children with additional needs in every school.

*Recommendation 22:* Ensure the assessment reports relating to a child's functional abilities and needs are made available to the classroom teacher, as well as forming part of the funding application.

***Adequate funding is available to allow effective support during the whole transition process (including the first year at school)***

*Recommendation 23:* Given the major involvement, expertise and knowledge within the ECI sector in supporting children with disabilities and delays and their families in the transition to school, these professionals are ideally placed (given targeted funding) to continue that support on a consultative basis into the first year at school.

*Recommendation 24:* (1) Review the current conditions attached to the 2 major ECI funding sources (ADHC & DEC's ISP: see Appendix 3 – p.15) with the aim of extending them to cover a child's first year at school; (2) Extend the already successfully trialled Transition Therapy programmes (funded by ADHC) to all ECI services.

In addition, there is major under-servicing throughout the school years for therapy and behaviour support for children and young people with disabilities.

*Recommendation 25:* Review all school-aged therapy and behaviour support services to address the significant unmet need in NSW. (This should include considering the therapy support model available in schools in Qld & Victoria).

*Overall Recommendation:* To legislate a consistent approach to transition to school that is reflective of current best practice.

**Conclusion**

Early Childhood Intervention Australia (NSW Chapter) would welcome the opportunity to work with DEC to develop protocols to strengthen connections between ECI services and schools to ensure a seamless transition for students with a disability or developmental delay.

**An ECIA NSW representative is available to be a witness at the Parliamentary Inquiry.**

## APPENDIX 1



### ECIA NSW POSITION STATEMENT

## INCLUSION

Early Childhood Intervention Australia (NSW Chapter) is the peak organisation in NSW for professionals who support young children with additional needs and their families. ECIA NSW is committed to the principles of family partnership based upon collaborative planning that reflects each family's individual strengths, needs and priorities. It respects the family's right to make decisions and to take responsibility for directing their own lives.

Inclusion embraces and values the diversity of individual abilities and complies with Article 23 from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (see *following page*). It fosters a sense of belonging and general well-being by providing opportunities to freely explore positive learning environments that build on strengths. It offers choices to children, as they grow, which encourage and foster their learning potential; and it enables them to participate independently in community life, while developing confidence and a strong sense of self.

An inclusive environment is holistic by nature and recognises the unique contribution each child and their family make to the richness of a diverse community. It creates an atmosphere of tolerance and nurtures community connectedness in ways that influence positive relationships and build social supports.

ECIA NSW believes that an inclusive early childhood learning environment is one that responds positively to the uniqueness of each individual child and their family. This involves the development and implementation of strategies to meet individual needs in areas including communication, mobility, socialisation and functional skills, which increase the child's capacity to engage in and contribute to all aspects of their daily life.

ECIA NSW endorses practices that promote, encourage and support inclusion and which lay the foundation for each child's successful participation within a diverse community.

*Adopted November 2008*

## ***United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child***

### ***Article 23***

1. States Parties recognize that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.

2. States Parties recognize the right of the disabled child to special care and shall encourage and ensure the extension, subject to available resources, to the eligible child and those responsible for his or her care, of assistance for which application is made and which is appropriate to the child's condition and to the circumstances of the parents or others caring for the child.

3. Recognizing the special needs of a disabled child, assistance extended in accordance with paragraph 2 of the present article shall be provided free of charge, whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents or others caring for the child, and shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development

4. States Parties shall promote, in the spirit of international co-operation, the exchange of appropriate information in the field of preventive health care and of medical, psychological and functional treatment of disabled children, including dissemination of and access to information concerning methods of rehabilitation, education and vocational services, with the aim of enabling States Parties to improve their capabilities and skills and to widen their experience in these areas. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

## APPENDIX 2

### Early childhood intervention (ECI) services in NSW

ECIs typically provide family-centred, co-ordinated services to young children (birth-school entry) who have a disability and/or developmental delay, and their families. These services generally include early special education, therapy (some or all of speech pathology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy), family support and behaviour support. They may be offered at an ECI centre, in the family's home or within another community context such as pre-schools or child care.

This table provides a summary of the different types of ECI services available to children with disabilities and developmental delays and their families. It also gives a brief indication of the features of each type of service, including broad eligibility indicators. The frequency of services offered varies considerably between and within each of these service types.

Service Provider	Eligibility guide	Family Support	Education	Therapy	Behaviour Support	Assessment
NGO ECI – all disabilities	Children (Birth-School age) with disability / developmental delay	✓	✓	Most do	Most do	All provide functional assessments ; some also offer formal
NGO ECI – disability specific	Children (Birth-School age) with specific diagnosed disability	✓	✓	✓	Most do	All provide functional assessments ; most also offer formal
ADHC ECI	Children with moderate to severe intellectual delay	✓ (including formal Case Management)	Rarely	✓	✓	✓
DEC EI class & itinerant support	Children 3-6 with moderate to severe developmental delay	No	✓	Some by NSW Health / ADHC	✓	✓
Dept Health EI	Children with mild delay	✓	Not usually	✓	✓	✓
Private Practitioner e.g. therapist, psychologist	Children with disabilities / delays	Some may	Not usually	✓	Some	✓
Private Organisation – often disability specific	Variable – most offer specific treatment approaches for particular disabilities (especially autism)	Some may	Variable	Most	Some	Most

## APPENDIX 3

### Main service funding sources in NSW to support young children with disabilities (birth - school entry)

TYPE	ECI SERVICES	MAINSTREAM ECE	DESCRIPTION	PURPOSE
DET - ISP	✓	✓	<b>Intervention Support Program</b> – supplementary funding for individual children, with funding level dependent on service type (e.g. centre-based, itinerant support).	Education - supporting inclusion
ADHC	✓		<b>Disability Support Program</b> – core funding contribution for a range of ECI service types.	Education, therapy, family support
DoCS - SCAN		✓	<b>Supporting Children with Additional Needs</b> in state funded pre-schools and occasional care – funding is for individual children.	Additional worker, resources and training.
DEEWR - IPSP (Federal)		✓	<b>Inclusion &amp; Professional Support Program</b> provides a funding contribution for support in Federally-funded children's services (e.g. long day care, family day care i.e. those eligible for Child Care Benefit) – to support individual children with additional staffing and general inclusion support.	Additional unskilled worker, resources and training