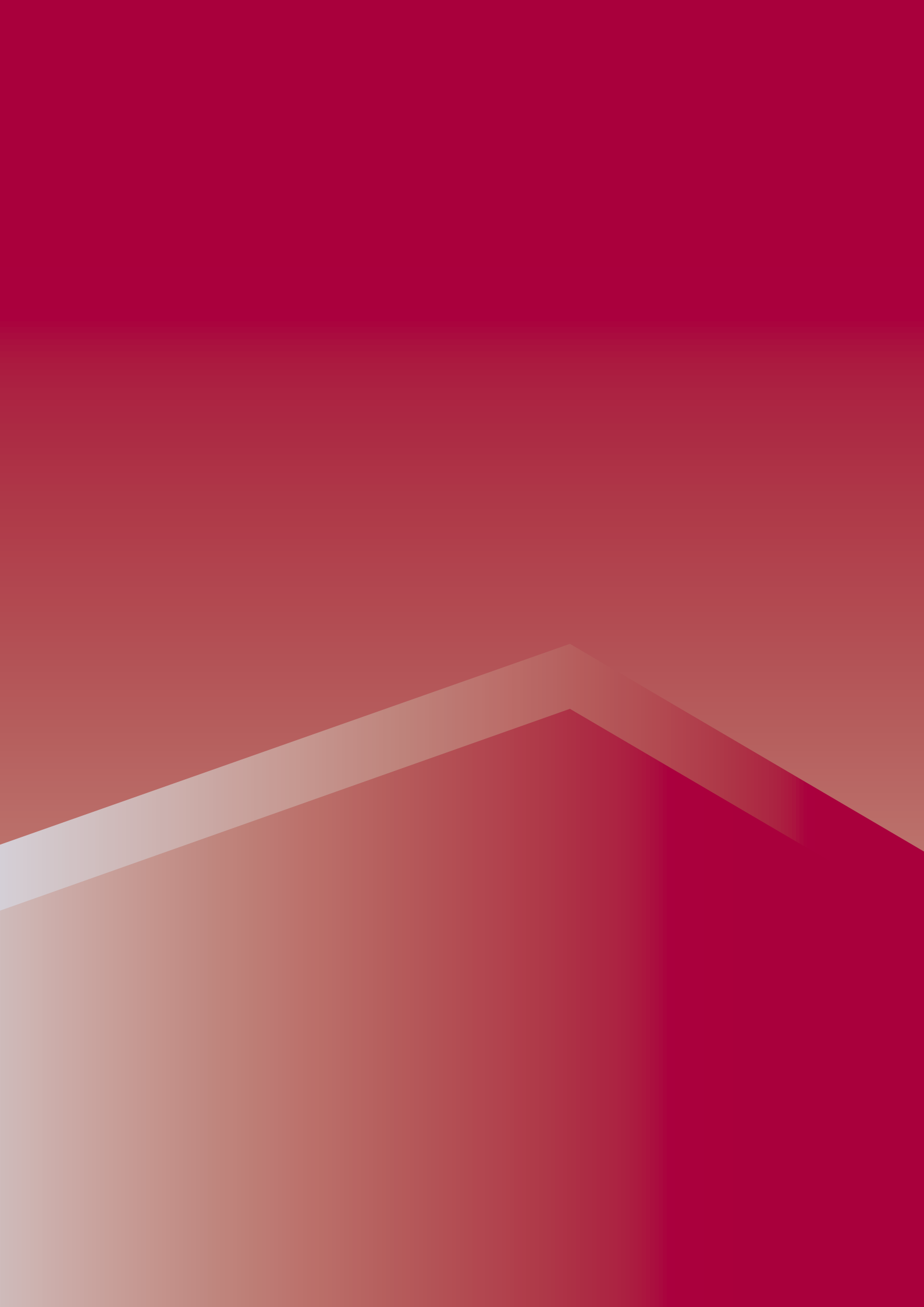




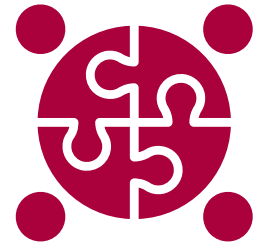
Creating
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Early Childhood Targeted Action Plan





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Early Childhood Targeted Action Plan

Introduction

Under Australia's *Disability Strategy 2021-2031* (the Strategy), governments have established Targeted Action Plans (TAPs) to make headway in achieving outcomes in specific areas of the Strategy.

The Early Childhood TAP focuses on children from infancy to school age with disability or developmental concerns, their families and carers. This TAP sets out key actions to strengthen early identification, information, supports and pathways, as well as collaboration between programs and services, all of which contribute to the development and wellbeing of children to help them thrive across and between life stages. These actions are for 2021-22 to 2023-24, noting these are working plans and will be updated with additional actions as appropriate.

Other documents that are linked to this TAP include State and Territory disability plans.

Case for Change

Current situation

Evidence demonstrates that best practice early childhood supports are particularly effective for very young children with disability or developmental concerns, if instigated as early as possible (i.e. from birth to the early years of schooling). Best practice early childhood support is provided to ensure that parents, carers, educators and others are equipped to help children gain the skills they need to participate meaningfully in all aspects of their lives. Effective early childhood supports seek to support the full potential of the child by building the capacity of parents, carers, educators and others to facilitate the child's learning and development.¹

Based on 2018 data,² there are around 115,000 children aged 0 to 6 years living in Australia with some level of disability. Of these, 90,000 have some degree of impairment, activity limitation or participation restriction, as defined by the [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#).³ As at 30 June 2021, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) supported approximately 72,000 children aged 0 to 6 years through an NDIS plan and an additional 11,800 children through initial supports, such as connecting them with mainstream and community services.⁴ There will always be a proportion of children with mild functional or developmental impairment that will not require, or may not meet the eligibility requirements to access the NDIS.

Recent reviews and reports, including the interim report of the [Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability](#), the Reimagine Australia's [Early Childhood Action Plan to 2030](#), and the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth's [Better Systems, Better Chances](#), have identified opportunities to improve health and education services and systems for children with disability or developmental concerns to better meet their needs. These include, but are not limited to, building workforce capacity; addressing service gaps; improving service pathways and interactions within and between systems; and ensuring the best practice family-centred approaches are embedded across all services.

These issues are often exacerbated for those in rural and remote communities, and for people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.⁵ To this end, the Outcomes, Objectives and Actions in this TAP are designed to address the multiple layers of disadvantage that many children with disability or developmental concerns face.

The evidence is clear that children and young people with disability who participate in early childhood education and complete school education have better post-school and employment outcomes. Participation in early childhood education and care settings should be encouraged as this is likely to lead to more children successfully transitioning into fulltime schooling.

A positive start to a child's education is important. To help facilitate this, key national policies such as the National Quality Framework and the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Declaration seek to embed principles of inclusion and equity in everyday practice for all children and students.

The 2020 Review of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* heard clear and consistent calls from students, parents, carers, and educators to strengthen the capability of educators and providers to effectively support children and students with disability to fully realise their learning potential and development in these early years.⁶ There was also recognition that broader community attitudes and awareness impact the experiences of children and students with disability.


Involvement of people with disability

The views of people with disability have informed the decision to create a TAP focused on improving early childhood outcomes for children with disability. The Strategy's Stage 2 consultations, which informed the TAP, included:

- A public submission process in response to a discussion paper on the Strategy.
- A series of focus groups to hear from people with disability, especially harder to reach cohorts that were not fully engaged in Stage 1 consultations on the Strategy.
- Workshops with Disability Representative Organisations.
- Cross-collaboration workshops on specific topics with people with lived experience of disability and representatives from key sectors.

The Early Childhood TAP specific consultations involved peak bodies, researchers, early intervention providers, allied health professionals, medical professionals and paediatricians, as well as parents and carers of children with disability who have lived experience. Representatives were from diverse community groups and demographics such as, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and culturally and linguistically diverse children, parents and carers. The Early Childhood TAP was also informed by a desktop review of relevant literature and recent reports.

Parents and carers of children with disability or developmental concerns, and people with disability will be involved in the implementation of relevant TAP actions, notably a pilot program to identify new ways to strengthen community supports. The program will be directly targeted at parents and carers, therefore a co-design process will ensure lived experience informs the program's deliverables.



Key Outcomes and Objectives

The Early Childhood TAP is designed to drive progress under the Health and Wellbeing; Education and Learning; Inclusive Homes and Communities; and Personal and Community Support Outcome Areas of the Strategy. Respectively, these Outcome Areas aim to ensure people with disability attain the highest possible health and wellbeing outcomes throughout their lives; achieve their full potential through education and learning; live in inclusive, accessible and well-designed homes and communities; and have access to a range of supports to assist them to live independently and engage in their communities.

This TAP has the following objectives:

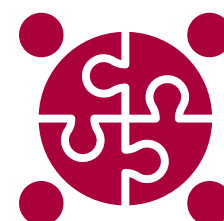
1. Enable early identification of disability or developmental concerns and develop clearer pathways and timely access to appropriate supports.
2. Strengthen the capability and capacity of key services and systems to support parents and carers to make informed choices about their child.
3. Encourage a stronger sense of inclusion and provide opportunities for parents, carers and children to build peer networks, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse parents and carers.

Actions will be implemented with an intersectional and diversity lens. This recognises that a person, or group of people can be affected by multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage. This can occur due to a person's race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, impairment, class, religion, age, social origin, and other identity markers. This means that activities taken in line with this TAP should incorporate tailored approaches designed to enable and include people and groups who face intersectional barriers. Actions should also consider how to meet the needs of people in rural and remote locations.

Monitoring and Reporting

A high-level progress report on the implementation of TAPs will be developed and published annually alongside other Australia's Disability Strategy reporting. The TAPs Progress Report will report on a financial year basis and will be published by October each year.

Actions



Australian Government actions

Objective 1: Enable early identification of disability or developmental concerns and develop clearer pathways and timely access to appropriate supports

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>1.1 Conduct service system gap analysis</p> <p>Investigate support pathways available to families in the early childhood landscape when disability or delay first emerges. Assess and identify system gaps and explore possible system solutions to ensure more timely access to appropriate supports.</p>	January 2022 – December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project scope completed by March 2022. • Research undertaken in consultation with families, providers, peaks as well as State and Territory stakeholders.
<p>1.2 Deliver training and resources to primary health care providers</p> <p>Provide support to facilitate, through Primary Health Networks (PHN) and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHS), improved access to primary health care services to better enable early detection of disability or developmental concerns in young children, and appropriate referral pathways, recognising the needs for priority population groups.</p>	January 2022 – June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing resources reviewed. • Targeted training and resources rolled out across 31 PHN, 143 ACCHS. • Evaluation of the services, and targeted training and resources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of professionals who undertake training and/or utilise resources. - % professionals satisfied with training or resources (survey).
<p>1.3 Improve culturally safe and appropriate developmental screening tool</p> <p>Improve the span of a culturally safe and appropriate developmental screening tool for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to increase developmental screening rates.</p>	January 2022 – June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culturally adapted questionnaires, flip charts, score sheets, guides and resources developed. • Communication, engagement and professional learning with key stakeholders. • Take-up evaluated.

Objective 1: Enable early identification of disability or developmental concerns and develop clearer pathways and timely access to appropriate supports

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>1.4 Develop online resources for educators</p> <p>Develop online resources to promote initial dialogue between schools and families on adjustments for children in their first year of school with characteristics consistent with autism.</p> <p>The resources will be culturally responsive for educators, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse children, parents and carers.</p>	<p>December 2021 – December 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovery phase and stakeholder consultation. • Resources developed with stakeholders. • Resources published online. • Resources evaluated. • Professional learning for educators on using the resources.

Objective 2: Strengthen the capability and capacity of key services and systems to support parents and carers to make informed choices about their child

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>2.1 Update online resources for parents and carers</p> <p>Review, update and expand on existing Commonwealth supported online resources to assist parents and carers to access appropriate supports for their young child with disability or developmental concerns, ensuring resources are informed by current research.</p>	<p>January 2022 – December 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing resources identified. Gap analysis undertaken. Existing online resources updated and expanded (including video production) with consumer and other key stakeholder input. Evidence-based referral guidelines for health professionals developed/ updated, building on existing guidelines and resources, and in consultation with key experts and stakeholders. Updated resources and guidelines evaluated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online hit rates.
<p>2.2 Increase awareness of rights and obligations in ECEC settings</p> <p>Improve the accessibility, inclusiveness and responsiveness of early childhood education and care (ECEC) through increased awareness and implementation of existing rights and obligations under the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>, and extension of the <i>Disability Standards for Education 2005 (DSE)</i> to include ECEC. This will be progressed as part of implementation of recommendations of the 2020 Review of the DSE.</p>	<p>January 2022 – December 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Products for parents and carers about the rights of children with disability in ECEC are developed, disseminated, and promoted. Includes a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Resources for ECEC providers on the rights of children with disability in ECEC are developed, disseminated, and promoted. The <i>Disability Standards for Education 2005</i> are amended to include ECEC.
<p>2.3 Negotiation of new preschool agreement 2022-2025 to consider needs of children with disability</p> <p>Consider the needs of children with disability in negotiation of the new preschool agreement with states and territories for 2022-2025. This should include improvements to data so governments can develop the most appropriate approaches to improve access for this diverse cohort. It could also include actions in state Implementation Plans under the agreement.</p>	<p>December 2021 – December 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to negotiation over the course of the new Agreement, new preschool data arrangements include data on children with disability, wherever possible.

Objective 2: Strengthen the capability and capacity of key services and systems to support parents and carers to make informed choices about their child

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>2.4 Review guidance for best practice early intervention</p> <p>Review, and if needed, update guidance for best practice in early childhood intervention, to provide an up to date framework that can be applied consistently across Australia to support young children with disability or developmental concerns, their parents and carers.</p>	<p>July 2022 – December 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current best practice guidance reviewed, research and evidence identified. • Consultations with key stakeholders. • Updated guidance developed. • Guidance published (including multiple adaptations, easy speak for parents, key professionals, translation into several languages) and promoted. • Evaluation of guidance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % of parents and carers satisfied. - % of key professionals satisfied.
<p>2.5 Develop educator resources to support inclusion</p> <p>Develop a resource for educators and teachers, to strengthen collaboration across systems working to support inclusion of children with disability or developmental concerns in mainstream ECEC settings.</p>	<p>January 2022 – June 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing services, supports and systems identified. • Resource developed with stakeholders. • Resources evaluated. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of educators/teachers who utilise resources. - % of educators/teachers satisfied with resources (survey).

Objective 3: Encourage a stronger sense of inclusion and provide opportunities for parents, carers and children to build peer networks, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse parents and carers

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>3.1 Recommendation report on programs to best support diverse cohorts</p> <p>Analyse existing community support models of peer networks, to identify inclusive, innovative and adaptable approaches and to support participation of all parents and carers. This includes, but is not limited to support models tailored for rural and remote locations, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse parents and carers.</p>	<p>January 2022 – June 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examination undertaken of existing community support models of peer networks. • Report finalised to provide analysis and identification of program models to best support different cohorts.
<p>3.2 Pilot a peer-led support program</p> <p>Develop and trial innovative new approaches for peer-led supports tailored for particular cohorts, co-designed by parents and carers of children with disability or developmental concerns, and people with disability.</p>	<p>June 2022 – June 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a strategy to engage co-design. • Development of pilot program, informed by the review of community support models of peer networks and co-design by parent and carers. • Pilot program rolled out in several test sites. • Evaluation undertaken and a report to governments, to present findings, analysis and inform future opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Number of participants per site. - % of parents and carers satisfied with program delivery.

New South Wales actions⁷

Objective 1: Enable early identification of disability or developmental concerns and develop clearer pathways and timely access to appropriate supports

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
1.1 NSW will review the current early identification and referral pathway processes across key NSW agencies to identify specific areas for process improvement through the NSW Disability Stakeholder Forum.	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSW Disability Stakeholder Forum outcomes paper.
1.2 Enhancements are being made to the ChildStory information technology system to make it easier for caseworkers to identify clients with disability, record information about a client's disability and access relevant NDIS information.	2021 Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status of ChildStory records.

Objective 2: Strengthen the capability of key services and systems to support parents and carers to make informed choices about their child

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
2.1 Aboriginal Child and Family Investment Strategy (ACFIS) to develop the capacity of Aboriginal services across NSW to contribute to Aboriginal communities and assist Aboriginal children and families; offering Aboriginal people the choice to receive services from Aboriginal NGOs.	2021 – 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers of staff trained. Numbers of ACCOs. Growth in investment.
2.2 The NSW Department of Education will create a one-stop on line resource with information for families and carers to have better and easier experiences when they engage with our system and access advice.	2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers accessing site.

Objective 3: Encourage a stronger sense of inclusion and provide opportunities for parents, carers and children to build peer networks, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse parents and carers

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>3.1 Increase the capacity of NSW Aboriginal Child and Family Centres (ACFC) to provide quality early childhood education and integrated health and family services to Aboriginal children, families and communities.</p> <p>ACFCs support Aboriginal children meet key developmental milestones and improve access to a range of quality services in a culturally safe environment.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2022 - ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased school attendance and achievement. • Improved health of Aboriginal children and young people. • Lower numbers of Aboriginal children entering the child protection system.

Victoria actions

Objective 1: Enable early identification of disability or developmental concerns and develop clearer pathways and timely access to appropriate supports

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>1.1 Early Parenting and Family Services</p> <p>Family services specialist disability practitioners work within the Victorian family services system to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist families to navigate disability support, including the NDIS, disability advocates, disability service providers and mainstream services. • Support assessment for early diagnosis of disability or developmental delay for vulnerable families. • Connect vulnerable families whose child(ren) have had an early diagnosis of developmental delay or disability with mainstream and disability supports. <p>Funding: \$9.79 million</p>	<p>1 May 2021 - 30 June 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved disability support for vulnerable families and increased capacity of families to identify disability support needs. • Reduced child protection notifications or involvement as parents are supported to address the disability support needs of their children.

Objective 1: Enable early identification of disability or developmental concerns and develop clearer pathways and timely access to appropriate supports

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>1.2 Early Learning</p> <p>The Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) Program provides a range of supports to Victorian Government funded kindergarten services to facilitate the meaningful inclusion and learning and development of children with a disability or developmental delay. The program applies to funded kindergarten enrolments, including four-year-old kindergarten, funded three-year-old kindergarten as it is progressively rolled out across Victoria, and Early Start Kindergarten for three-year-old children who are Aboriginal, known to Child Protection or from a refugee or asylum seeker background.</p> <p>KIS program supports are tailored to the particular needs of individual children and can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist training and consultancy for early childhood educators to meet the individual needs of a child with a disability and high support needs or complex medical needs. • Minor building modifications such as ramps and grip rails to support the child's attendance and participation. • Additional staffing support. KIS funded additional assistants work as part of the team delivering the kindergarten program to all children in the group. <p>The Preschool Field Officer program provides dedicated advice and support for the inclusion of individual children, as well as helping educators to link families with broader child and family supports. Like KIS, this is available to all Victorian funded kindergarten services in all settings to support the inclusion of all children with additional needs who are funded.</p>	<p>Ongoing programs available to all Victorian funded kindergarten services and enrolments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with additional needs are welcomed and actively supported to access and engage in a kindergarten program that is inclusive and responsive to their individual needs.

Objective 2: Strengthen the capability of key services and systems to support parents and carers to make informed choices about their child

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>2.1 Early Parenting and Family Services</p> <p>The Children with Complex Disability Support Needs program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies families with children with complex disability support needs who are at risk of requiring care outside of the family home. The program will support the return of children living in voluntary out of home care due to these disability needs. Provides targeted interventions and a case management approach will be provided by family services agencies delivering the program to build parental capacity and resilience, while working collaboratively with the NDIS to support planning of disability and other supports for both the child and parents. <p>Funding: \$5.037 million</p>	<p>1 January 2021 – 30 June 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved maintenance and sustainability of care arrangements and family reunification, where possible. Parents are supported to understand their child's disability support needs to provide for the wellbeing and development of their child and maintain family functioning and family-based care. Parents are provided with the information and support to navigate both the NDIS and systems of family and disability support outside of the NDIS.

Objective 3: Encourage a stronger sense of inclusion and provide opportunities for parents, carers and children to build peer networks, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse parents and carers

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>3.1 Parenting Support</p> <p>The Strengthening Parent Support Program (SPSP) provides peer support opportunities for parents and carers of children from birth to 18 years who have a disability or developmental delay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program connects families in local communities to participate in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peer support groups. - Education or information sessions. - Individual support from a qualified coordinator. <p>Funding: \$680,000 annually</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The SPSP aims to achieve the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and carers of children with a disability or developmental delay are supported to provide high quality care to their children that supports their learning and development. • Parents and carers feel more supported in their parenting role. • Parents and carers have increased access to information about evidence-based services and supports that can assist them.



Queensland actions

Objective 1: Enable early identification of disability or developmental concerns and develop clearer pathways and timely access to appropriate supports

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>1.1 Support inclusive practice in Queensland kindergartens by updating and promoting the Early Years Connect training and resources for the early detection of disability or developmental concerns in young children, evidence-based practice strategies and wellbeing outcomes.</p> <p>Targeted training and resources will be tailored to the needs of children in priority population groups.</p>	<p>January 2022 - December 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and resources promoted broadly and targeted to Early Childhood Education and Care services.
<p>1.2 Support inclusive practice in Early Years Places through targeted training and the development of resources tailored to assist with the identification of the needs of young children with disability and/or developmental concerns.</p>	<p>January 2022 - December 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice guide developed and evaluated.
<p>1.3 Facilitate connections between ECDP, kindergartens, schools, NDIS and Early Years Places to ensure successful transitions for children with disability.</p>	<p>December 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Years Services report on improved and/or increased partnerships with ECDP, Schools and NDIS to support successful transitions.
<p>1.4 Support parents of children with a disability through the <i>Stepping Stones Triple P</i> parenting program, which is designed to offer tailored support to meet the different needs of families raising children with disability.</p>	<p>30 June 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of children/families with disability supported through the program.
<p>1.5 Enhancing specialist individual advocacy services – Children and younger people</p> <p>Fund the Queensland Disability Advocacy Program Specialist Individual Advocacy service to ensure children and younger people with disability receive advocacy supports that uphold their rights and interests and to increase the control they have over their lives, through representation and building the person's capacity for self-advocacy.</p>	<p>2022 – June 2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and younger people with disability receiving advocacy services, their carers and/or guardians, experience improved interactions with mainstream service systems which is measured through regular service reporting.

Objective 2: Strengthen the capability and capacity of key services and systems to support parents and carers to make informed choices about their child

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>2.1 Improve access to early childhood information and resources for parents and carers of children with disability.</p>	<p>January 2022 - December 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of dedicated online inclusion webpage.
<p>2.2 Promoting, supporting and recognising the role of carers</p> <p>Promote the role of carers and ensure their views are heard and inform policy and program development through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding Carers Queensland as a peak disability body to 30 June 2022. • Administering a Ministerial Advisory Council to provide a voice for carers. • Promoting and upholding the principles in the Carers Recognition Act 2008 'Carers Charter'. 	<p>2022 - 2024 (Carers Queensland funding to 30 June 2022)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carers Queensland funded as a disability peak body to 30 June 2022 to promote the role of carers as measured through regular service reporting. • Regular meetings of the Queensland Carers Advisory Council, established under the Carers (Recognition) Act 2008 (Qld), provides advice on work to promote the interests of carers and make recommendations to support carer recognition.

Objective 3: Encourage a stronger sense of inclusion and provide opportunities for parents, carers and children to build peer networks, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse parents and carers

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>3.1 Promote greater inclusivity of children aged from birth to eight years with disability and/or developmental delay who are from diverse communities attending the Early Years Places.</p>	<p>January 2022 - December 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice guide developed and evaluated. • Number of children with disability who participated in activities at an Early Years place. • Number of parents/carers with disability who participated in activities at an Early Years place.
<p>3.2 Fund disability peak bodies to deliver actions to improve inclusion for people with disability.</p>	<p>2021 - 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funded peak entities deliver agreed outcomes, measured through regular service reporting.

Western Australia actions

Objective 1: Enable early identification of disability or developmental concerns and develop clearer pathways and timely access to appropriate supports

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>1.1 Realising individual capacity</p> <p>Continue to build the capacity of principals, teachers and allied professionals to provide teaching and learning adjustments that meet individual student needs, including students with disability.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified capacity building program.
<p>1.2 Teaching and learning</p> <p>Develop and implement a framework that supports the teaching and learning needs of students with disability who are demonstrating complex needs.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified framework.

Objective 2: Strengthen the capability and capacity of key services and systems to support parents and carers to make informed choices about their child

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>2.1 Sports for all children</p> <p>Maintain KidSport to ensure that children with disability from low socio-economic backgrounds can enjoy club sport opportunities.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program operating.

Objective 3: Encourage a stronger sense of inclusion and provide opportunities for parents, carers and children to build peer networks, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse parents and carers

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>3.1 Connecting the CaLD community Promote access to networks for parents, carers and children with disability from CaLD background by sharing information about inclusive initiatives and events via the Office of Multicultural Interest media platforms and through CaLD sector networks.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported initiatives.
<p>3.2 Engaging with ACCOs Work with Aboriginal Advisory Groups and Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations (ACCOs) to implement the ACCO Strategy and build the capacity of ACCOs to become registered NDIS disability service providers.</p>	By 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified targeted capacity development.

South Australia actions

Objective 1: Enable early identification of disability or developmental concerns and develop clearer pathways and timely access to appropriate supports

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>1.1 Improving community understanding and awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide through the Department of Education SA's Special Education Resource Unit a range of support and learning opportunities to parents, carers and Department of Education SA staff. • Provide e-learning disability courses for educators in SA. • Hold annual Inclusive Education Expo to showcase high quality practice in inclusive education and training for educators in SA. 	January 2022 – December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of parents/carers and educators who have accessed supports and resources through SERU. • Number and percentage of educators who have undertaken training in available e-learning courses. • Number and percentage of educators who attend and/or participate in the Expo.
<p>1.2 Commence expansion of the SA child development health screening system under the Department for Education's Early Learning Strategy to support increased early identification and intervention for developmental and health concerns.</p>	Pilots to commence 2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased percentage of children developmentally on track. • Decreased percentage of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domain.
<p>1.3 Support the early identification of children and young people with disability and developmental delay under the Guardianship of the Chief Executive of the Department for Child Protection.</p>	January 2022 – ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased percentage of children and young people in care identified as having disability or developmental delay.
<p>1.4 Increase Adults Supporting Kids (ASK) website resources for disability and early childhood services and resources.</p>	To commence May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated disability resources and service providers are easily accessible through the ASK website.
<p>1.5 Include disability resources for professionals as part of the expansion of the ASK website content.</p>	December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional visitors to the ASK website are accessing disability resources and appropriate service providers.
<p>1.6 Develop specific messages and identify sources of promotion to publicise the ASK website disability content.</p>	To commence May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors to the ASK website are arriving through identified promotion sources.
<p>1.7 Undertake analysis of the prevalence of young children with a disability in the Child and Family Support System (CFSS) population.</p>	TBA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary report of prevalence of young children with a disability in the CFSS population is prepared and presented to Thriving SA and Chief Executive Council.

Objective 2: Strengthen the capability and capacity of key services and systems to support parents and carers to make informed choices about their child

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>2.1 Strengthen outcomes for children with disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and provide programs which support the learning of children and students with disability such as the Inclusive Education Support Program (IESP) which allocates funding to children and young people based on their needs to support their access to learning. • Schools use the Abilities Based Learning and Educational Support (ABLES) program which supports the teaching of students with significant intellectual disability. 	2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and percentage of students with disability who have achieved their SACE. • Children and students with significant intellectual disability who are working towards foundation in the areas of literacy and mathematics access ABLES.
<p>2.2 Increase consistent and readily accessible child development information and education under the Department for Education's Early Learning Strategy.</p>	2022-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better child development and education information is easily accessible to families and educators.
<p>2.3 Strengthen engagement with parents and carers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with parents of children with disability through forums, conferences, meetings and workshops. • Parent/carer and child/young person voice is included in the personalised planning process (One Plan). • Provide through the Special Education Resource Unit a range of support and learning opportunities, to parents, carers and Department of Education SA staff. • Improved online accessibility of the Department of Education SA's website and intranet. 	January 2022 – December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation and engagement opportunities are held termly. • Each child with disability has a One Plan. • Number of staff undertaking training and the number of parents and carers accessing services. • Communications policy is reviewed at least every 3 years.
<p>2.4 Increase information sharing between services to enable more coordinated responses to families under the Department for Education's Early Learning Strategy.</p>	Data and information sharing project to be scoped in 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant information sharing has increased between services and improved coordinated responses to families.

Objective 2: Strengthen the capability and capacity of key services and systems to support parents and carers to make informed choices about their child

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>2.5 Ensure foster and kinship carers are provided with information about caring for children and young people with disability and developmental delay.</p>	<p>January 2022 – ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop information and resources for carers to access via the Department for Child Protection Carer Portal.
<p>2.6 Ensure the Parenting SA Parent Easy Guides (PEGs) are available to all parents/caregivers in accessible locations for easy access:</p> <p>Milestones: children 0-4 years Developmental delay Children with a disability Disability: brothers and sisters</p>	<p>January 2022 – December 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of specific PEGs distributed.
<p>2.7 Promote the Parenting and Family Support teams workshops and webinars that empower parents/caregivers to understand child development and recognise developmental delay.</p>	<p>January 2022 – December 2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of participants attending workshops identifying living with a disability or living with a child with a disability.
<p>2.8 Progress the development of a workshop specifically for parents/caregivers living with a child with a disability – “Developing Differently”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and overview completed. • Pilot with parents/caregivers with lived experience. 	<p>January 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop completed and approved. • Pilot completed and report submitted.
<p>2.9 Include the input and voice of parents and caregivers living with a child with a disability in the development of the Parenting and Family Support program’s workshop - “Developing Differently”.</p>	<p>January 2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lived experience input included in final workshop.

Objective 3: Encourage a stronger sense of inclusion and provide opportunities for parents, carers and children to build peer networks, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse parents and carers

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>3.1 Review current support and develop resources for families and educators to use with children from diverse backgrounds including Aboriginal children and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) children under the Department for Education's Early Learning Strategy.</p>	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal children access and participate in quality early childhood learning and care that incorporates meaningful engagement from families and communities. • Aboriginal children and their families have in place the foundations for learning as they transition from home to early childhood services to school and between schools. • Aboriginal families and communities are active participants in the governance of child and family centres.

Tasmania actions

Objective 1: Enable early identification of disability or developmental concerns and develop clearer pathways and timely access to appropriate supports

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
1.1 Implement the Paediatric Model of Care developed through the Improving Children's Health and Therapy Through Appropriate Services (iCHAT TAS) project.	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established Children's Health Service Pathway.
1.2 Increase capacity of the Tasmanian Autism Diagnostic Services with an investment of \$350 000 per year across four years from 2021-22.	2021-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved timeliness to diagnostic services for children.

Objective 2: Strengthen the capability and capacity of key services and systems to support parents and carers to make informed choices about their child

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
2.1 Build 6 new centres to expand the network of child and family centres which support the health and well-being education and care of Tasmania's very young children by supporting parents and enhancing accessibility of services in the local community.	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction of 6 additional child and family centres has commenced.
2.2 Advertise for first tranche of speech pathologists, psychologists and social workers to deliver on the commitment of availability in every child and family learning centre.	2021-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement of speech pathologists, psychologists and social workers.

Objective 3: Encourage a stronger sense of inclusion and provide opportunities for parents, carers and children to build peer networks, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse parents and carers

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>3.1 Implement the Paediatric Model of Care developed through the iCHAT TAS project.</p>	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed evaluation of Paediatric Model of Care consumer co-designed implementation including the values of 'connect' and 'empower'. • Established Tasmanian State-wide Paediatric Health Professionals Network inclusive of consumer membership.
<p>3.2 Build 6 new centres to expand the network of child and family centres which support the health and well-being education and care of Tasmania's very young children by supporting parents and enhancing accessibility of services in the local community.</p>	2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity to build supportive networks.

Australian Capital Territory actions

Objective 1: Enable early identification of disability or developmental concerns and develop clearer pathways and timely access to appropriate supports

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>1.1 Child Development Service</p> <p>Continue to deliver the Child Development Service which offers assessment, referral, information and linkages for children 0-6 years where there are concerns relating to their development.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBC.
<p>1.2 Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT</p> <p>Deliver on the Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT, a 10-year plan which was launched in 2020 for early childhood education and care in the ACT, including children with disability and developmental vulnerabilities.</p>	2020-2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy targets are met.

Objective 2: Strengthen the capability and capacity of key services and systems to support parents and carers to make informed choices about their child

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>2.1 ACT Playgroups</p> <p>Continue to support ACT Playgroups to provide early intervention playgroups designed to support the journey of families with young children aged 0-5 with additional needs.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBC.
<p>2.2 Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT</p> <p>Deliver on the Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT, a 10-year plan which was launched in 2020 for early childhood education and care in the ACT, including children with disability and developmental vulnerabilities.</p>	2020-2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy targets are met.

Objective 3: Encourage a stronger sense of inclusion and provide opportunities for parents, carers and children to build peer networks, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse parents and carers

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>3.1 Koori Preschool Program</p> <p>Continue to support the delivery of a high quality, high expectation, and holistic Koori Preschool Program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children living in the ACT aged 0-5 years, grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, knowledge, and values, that recognises children and their families, are proud, strong and deadly.</p>	2020-2030	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBC.

Northern Territory actions

Objective 1: Enable early identification of disability or developmental concerns and develop clearer pathways and timely access to appropriate supports

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>1.1 Delivery of the Healthy Under 5 Kids Partnering with Families (HU5K-PF) Program</p> <p>The Program provides a universal standardised well child health program for all children in the NT aged 0-5 years.</p> <p>The program includes anthropometric assessment, developmental screening, anticipatory guidance and health promotion education for parents.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental Screening 0-5 yrs using ASQ3; ASQ:SE2, and ASQ TRAK. • Expand compliance of developmental screening within the HU5K-PF Program to identify children below cut off. • Number of children screened. • Number of children below cut off and referred for further assessment.
<p>1.2 The provision of the Newborn Hearing Screening in the birthing hospitals within the NT.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of children screened. • Number of children identified with permanent hearing impairment.
<p>1.3 Supporting children with disability in care</p> <p>The Disability Development Team within the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (the Department) (TFHC) supports the Youth Justice division; kinship and foster carers and Territory Families Clients with a diagnosed or suspected disability or developmental delay. The team comprising of skilled professionals, has the following key objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people with a suspected disability or developmental delay are assessed utilising funded services. • Thorough planning is developed, implemented and reviewed for all children and young people with a diagnosed disability or developmental delay through coordination and collaboration of stakeholders. • Planning ensures clients have access to funding and funded services to meet their needs. 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of children and young people in care with confirmed or suspected disability or developmental delay receiving assessment and support utilising the Medical and Allied Health Specialist Service panel contract. • Increase in the number of children and young people who are in the care of the Chief Executive Officer with confirmed disability diagnosis. • Increase in the number of children and young people diagnosed with a disability or developmental delay accessing funding and funded services.

Objective 1: Enable early identification of disability or developmental concerns and develop clearer pathways and timely access to appropriate supports

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>1.3 Supporting children with disability in care continued</p> <p>As part of its role the team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates access to TFHC funded medical and allied health providers. • Connects children and young people with disability in care to appropriate supports and services, including specialist disability and mainstream services. • Ensures children and young people’s disability support plans are developed, current, implemented, and reviewed. • Provides skilled guidance to assist TFHC staff and families to support children and young people with disability. • Upskills staff and carers to understand and navigate the disability sector. • Facilitates collaborative working relationships between the Department and relevant service providers, including the NDIS. <p>The Specialist and Allied Health Services panel contract supports children in out of home care to access specialist assessment services that can lead to appropriate diagnoses that can support children in care access appropriate services.</p>		

Objective 1: Enable early identification of disability or developmental concerns and develop clearer pathways and timely access to appropriate supports

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>1.4 Early Intervention – Families as First Teachers (FaFT) program and Preschool</p> <p>Develop and implement a targeted campaign to encourage preschools and FaFT early learning and family support programs to more actively reflect on their children's needs and engage in early intervention.</p>	2021-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of ECEC services rated 'met' (under the NQF) performance against the NQS: Element 6.2.2 Access and participation - Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program. • Developmental Screening 0-5 yrs using ASQ3; ASQ:SE2, and ASQ TRAK. • Expand compliance of developmental screening within the FaFT Program to identify children below cut off. • Number of children screened. • Number of children below cut off and referred for further assessment.
<p>1.5 Developmental screening</p> <p>Implement the ASQ-TRAK developmental screening tool for children aged two months to four years across Families as First Teachers (FaFT) sites in the NT to inform program delivery according to the needs of individual children.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASQ-TRAK screening tool implemented in 80% of FaFT sites.
<p>1.6 Wrap around support</p> <p>Provide wrap around support to ensure all children with additional needs have the opportunity to engage, grow and achieve in their first years of education.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of children with disability supported prior to their first years of school.

Objective 2: Strengthen the capability and capacity of key services and systems to support parents and carers to make informed choices about their child

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>2.1 Nurse Home Visiting Programs</p> <p>Delivery of sustained Nurse Home Visiting Programs are provided in most remote and urban regions of the NT for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.</p> <p>Sustained nurse home visiting programs include the Maternal Early Childhood Sustained Home visiting program (MECSH) supported by the Northern Territory Government; and the Australian Nurse-Family Partnership Program (ANFPP) supported by the Australian Government.</p> <p>Together the programs support provision of sustained Nurse Home Visiting in most remote and urban regions of the NT for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women. The programs are primarily delivered by Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation with some provision directly from the NT Government.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of women completing a SNHV Program.
<p>2.2 The Healthy Under 5 Kids Partnering with Families (HU5K-PF) Program</p> <p>The HU5K-PF Program provides a universal standardised well child health program for all children in the NT aged 0-5 yrs.</p> <p>The program includes anthropometric assessment, developmental screening, anticipatory guidance and health promotion education for parents.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of parents provided with anticipatory guidance information that supports the development and wellbeing of their children.

Objective 2: Strengthen the capability and capacity of key services and systems to support parents and carers to make informed choices about their child

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>2.3 Supporting children with disability in care</p> <p>The Disability Development Team within the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities (the Department) (TFHC) supports the Youth Justice division; kinship and foster carers and Territory Families Clients with a diagnosed or suspected disability or developmental delay. The team comprising of skilled professionals, has the following key objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children and young people with a suspected disability or developmental delay are assessed utilising funded services. • Thorough planning is developed, implemented and reviewed for all children and young people with a diagnosed disability or developmental delay through coordination and collaboration of stakeholders. • Planning ensures clients have access to funding and funded services to meet their needs. <p>As part of its role the team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates access to TFHC funded medical and allied health providers. • Connects children and young people with disability in care to appropriate supports and services, including specialist disability and mainstream services. • Ensures children and young people's disability support plans are developed, current, implemented, and reviewed. • Provides skilled guidance to assist TFHC staff and families to support children and young people with disability. • Upskills staff and carers to understand and navigate the disability sector. • Facilitates collaborative working relationships between the Department and relevant service providers, including the NDIS. 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of children and young people diagnosed with a disability or developmental delay accessing NT funding and NT funded services.

Objective 2: Strengthen the capability and capacity of key services and systems to support parents and carers to make informed choices about their child

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>2.4 Building knowledge through the Families as First Teachers Program (FaFT)</p> <p>Continue implementation of an early learning and family support program for young children and their families in NT remote and regional/town settings, in order to support parents and families to improve their knowledge and understanding of child development and how they can support their children's growth and development.</p>	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and frequency of children and parents participating in the FaFT program. • The number of parents provided with anticipatory guidance information that supports the development and wellbeing of their children. • Number of children developmentally screened using the ASQ-TRAK.
<p>2.5 National Quality Framework – National Quality Standard (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority)</p> <p>Targeted monitoring of services' performance against the 'National Quality Standard: element 6.1.3 Families are supported' to identify trends to indicate any future strategies, actions or professional development needs.</p>	2021-23 (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services rated 'met' for element 6.1.3.
<p>2.6 Student Advocacy Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trial and develop student advocacy services to assist families navigating the system or resolve issues between students, families and education providers. • Develop and provide informative resources and support materials targeted to families to assist them in making informed decisions about their child's/children's education. 	2021-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of families supported by the independent advocates. • Information and support materials developed and distributed to families.

Objective 3: Encourage a stronger sense of inclusion and provide opportunities for parents, carers and children to build peer networks, including for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse parents and carers

Actions	Timeline	Indicator(s)
<p>3.1 National Quality Framework – National Quality Standard (Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority)</p> <p>Monitor regulated services’ (under the National Quality Framework) performance against National Quality Standard: element 6.2.3 Community engagement - The service builds relationships and engages with its community. Data from monitoring is used to identify service needs.</p>	2021-23 (ongoing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of ECEC services rated ‘met’ for element 6.2.3.
<p>3.2 Giving Voice to Children, Students and Families</p> <p>Develop and implement initiatives to engage families of students with additional needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish advisory groups including parents, students and key stakeholders. • Provide support materials for educators to better enable them to establish welcoming, safe and inclusive environments for students and families from a range of cultural backgrounds. • Promote examples of best practice inclusion in the NT, including family voice, from a range of settings. 	2021-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop culturally appropriate and inclusive elements to represent inclusion. • Support materials developed, including vignettes. • Number of engagement activities undertaken. • Increase in students who report their own ideas, opinions, knowledge and experience are heard and valued.

Endnotes

- 1 T Moore, '[Services and supports in the early years](#)', Children and Young People with Disability Australia, 2020.
- 2 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), '[Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings methodology](#)', ABS website, 2019.
- 3 ABS, Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings methodology.
- 4 National Disability Insurance Scheme, '[Quarterly report: 2020-21 Q3](#)', NDIS, 2021.
- 5 Early Childhood Intervention Australia, '[What is Best Practice?](#)', Reimagine Australia, 2016.
- 6 Department of Education, Skills and Employment, '[Final Report – 2020 Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)', Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2020, p. 27.
- 7 The NSW Disability Inclusion Act (2014), NSW Disability Inclusion Plan and the Disability Inclusion Action Plans (DIAPs) of all NSW Government Clusters and 128 Local Councils are the primary mechanisms by which NSW will deliver on the actions of Australia's Disability Strategy.

As at December 2021 NSW is in the process of finalising the next iteration of DIAPs. Clusters are revising their DIAPs as required and Local Councils need to finalise their DIAPS by July 2022. Actions included above are either planned actions with confirmed funding, current actions or recently completed activity that will continue to impact the outcomes of the Early Childhood TAP over the course of the TAP.



