

# WORKING TOGETHER AGREEMENT



## How to use the Working Together Agreement

### Why use the Working Together Agreement?

Children with disability and/or developmental delay learn best when everyone in their life works together in a consistent way.

The Working Together Agreement aims to assist families, early childhood and child care (ECEC) settings and early childhood intervention (ECI) practitioners to work collaboratively to:

- share philosophies and approaches to inclusion.
- clarify roles and responsibilities.
- work in an inclusive manner, recognising that learning happens in everyday environments, through relationships with the people with whom children spend most time.
- work out the best ways of communicating with each other.
- share important operations, practices, processes or strategies.
- set goals and outcomes relevant to the ECEC setting.
- monitor children's progress and practical use of inclusive strategies within the ECEC setting.

### Who should use the Working Together Agreement?

The Agreement:

- may be initiated by the ECEC, ECI or family.
- is designed to be signed and used by all members of a child's team as a basis for their collaboration in the best interests of children and families.
- may act as a starting point for the team to talk about who may be the most appropriate ECI practitioner to have primary contact with the ECEC service for a particular period of time and how all team members can best communicate.

### When should the Agreement be used, reviewed and shared?

- when a child with developmental delay or disability is attending any ECEC setting, this agreement will establish the principles, terms of collaboration and other important details between the team members who will work together to support the child's inclusion.
- when a new ECI practitioner becomes involved in a child's team, in particular if there is a plan for this person to be visiting the early childhood setting.
- when there is a new ECEC educator.
- at agreed intervals, when reviewing goals and progress for a child
- planning strategies for staff to embed within the ECEC program.

### How should the Agreement be used?

The Agreement should be used:

- during face-to-face or online meetings between families, ECEC educators and ECI practitioners.
- via email, if needed. The Working Together Agreement can be read, individualised and signed electronically if certain members of the team do not have the opportunity to meet in person.
- specific priorities can be added to the agreement which are relevant to particular collaborative team work.

**The process of working together is continuous while an ECI is involved with an ECEC. It is important to revisit the Working Together Agreement at agreed times to monitor progress in relation to common goals and the Agreement itself.**

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## Meeting Agenda

Date of meeting: .....

### What to bring:

- Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) document.
- any other individual plan which has goals or outcomes relevant to the ECEC setting.
- family ideas or priorities.
- relevant notes or observations (ECE/ECI).
- any relevant questions (all team members).

### Family members attending Working Together Agreement Meeting:

.....

.....

.....

### ECEC educator/s and ECI practitioner/s attending Working Together Agreement Meeting:

.....

.....

.....

### Name/s of anyone else who the Agreement should be shared with:

Name	Organisation	How? (eg. email)

### Meeting items:

- 1 Family priorities for child participating in early childhood education and care (ECEC) setting.
- 2 ECEC setting's philosophy around inclusion.
- 3 Preferred ways of communicating and how often communication will generally occur.
- 4 Talk about roles and responsibilities for all involved when early childhood intervention (ECI) practitioner visits ECEC setting.
- 5 Talk about the focus of any relevant goals for the child to the ECEC setting.
- 6 Plan ECI visit times for times which suit all involved.
- 7 Other.

Date of planned follow up: .....

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**INSERT YOUR  
LOGO HERE**

Insert Name of ECEC Service

Insert Date of letter

Dear (insert name of ECI practitioner),

We look forward to working with you to support (insert child's name) development and inclusion in our setting. We are writing to provide you with some information about our philosophy, practical considerations and to let you know that we are using a Working Together Agreement to make sure that we are working together with all members of (insert child's name's) team in an effective manner.

## **Our philosophy**

We provide a play-based curriculum on the premise that children learn through social interaction. We aim to embed learning within everyday experiences. We collaborate with families and other professionals to enhance children's learning and well-being.

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) recognises that 'Partnerships ... involve educators, families and support professionals working together to explore the learning potential in every day events, routines and play so that children with additional needs are provided with daily opportunities to learn from active participation and engagement in these experiences...' (DEEWR, 2009, p. 12).

## **Communication**

We would like to set up methods of communication which work for all of us in (insert child's name's) team. When you need us to set aside time to talk with you during your visits please let us know so this can be planned.

## **Child protection**

To meet our obligations and maintain our duty of care to all children, any children attending the service need to remain within our employed staff's view at all times. It is not possible for visiting staff to withdraw children and work with them outside of the view of our staff.

## **Professional learning**

We look for strategies which are able to be embedded into everyday routines with all children. We reflect on and provide feedback where necessary on the outcomes of agreed strategies.

## **Confidentiality**

We are only able to communicate with professionals about a child when the parent has signed a permission to contact form. We do not talk about children in front of other children or parents.

## **Practical things to know when visiting our centre**

- When you arrive for your visit, please make sure you sign in to our visitors' book.
- We are a SunSafe centre. Please bring along a sun hat to wear in our outdoor area.
- The best times for you to visit our service are: (insert times here).

Please contact me should you require any further information. The best way to contact me is via email or telephone. We can arrange a time to meet or talk in person as needed.

Yours Sincerely,

INSERT NAME

INSERT ROLE

INSERT SERVICE NAME

INSERT YOUR CONTACT DETAILS HERE

# WORKING TOGETHER AGREEMENT



**INSERT YOUR  
LOGO HERE**

Insert Name of ECI Service

Insert Date of letter

Dear (insert name of ECEC director),

I am writing to introduce myself as I am involved with (insert child's name) and his/her family as an early childhood intervention practitioner/key worker.

I am writing to let you know that we would like to use a Working Together Agreement to make sure that we are working together with all members of (insert child's name's) team in an effective and productive manner.

## **Our approach**

I would like to observe (insert child's name) during a number of learning experiences and routines such as group time, meal time and play. I would like to hear from EC educators about any areas which are going well and any challenges that may be being experienced in terms of (insert child's name's) inclusion. I would like to work on areas of priority to the child's family and your staff, and can provide play-based strategies based on the premise that children learn through social interaction. When I visit your setting, I will aim to embed learning within everyday experiences and model strategies which early childhood educators can utilise throughout your program to enhance (insert child's name's) participation.

## **Professional learning and capacity-building**

You may have specific observations, questions or areas you would like to share with me. When I visit I will use and model strategies, which are able to be embedded into everyday routines with the child's peers in your setting. It will be helpful to receive your feedback on the applicability and outcomes of strategies when you embed in your practice. A goal of my visits to your setting is to learn from you about (insert child's name's) learning and participation and to share relevant strategies which can be used across the week to enhance this child's inclusion.

## **Confidentiality**

I am only able to communicate with other professionals about a child when the parent has signed a permission to contact form. I will not talk about children in front of other children or parents.

## **Communication with each other**

Please let me know if there is anything you would like me to know in terms of your policies or practices. The best way to contact me is via email or telephone.

Please find attached the "How to Use the Working Together Agreement" info sheet. Please let me know when would be a suitable time to meet with you to set up the Working Together Agreement for (insert child's name).

I look forward to working in partnership with you and your staff to support (insert child's name's) development and inclusion in your setting.

Yours Sincerely,

INSERT NAME

INSERT ROLE

INSERT SERVICE NAME

INSERT YOUR CONTACT DETAILS HERE

# WORKING TOGETHER AGREEMENT



INSERT YOUR LOGO HERE

Insert Name of ECEC Service

Insert Date of letter

Dear (insert name of Parent/Carer),

I am writing to let you know about the Working Together Agreement we are using at our early childhood setting to help us to work in a more coordinated and consistent manner with professionals who visit our setting to work with your child. We are hoping you could participate in this process with us, as you know (insert child's name) the best.

We would like to arrange a meeting with you and any key early childhood intervention professional/s involved in your child's team.

Please let us know the contact details of any early childhood intervention professional/s who you would like to attend the meeting. It would also be helpful if you could suggest a couple of possible times for the meeting which would work for you on the tear off form below.

Please contact me should you require any further information.

Yours Sincerely

INSERT NAME

INSERT ROLE

INSERT SERVICE NAME

Preferred times for Working Together Agreement for (insert child's name) team.

Day	Date	Time	Location

Below are the names of the early childhood intervention professionals that we understand are currently supporting your child in relation to their inclusion in our early childhood setting to invite to the meeting.

Name	Role	Organisation	Contact

Please let us know the contact details of any additional early childhood intervention professional/s that you would like to invite to the meeting.

Name	Role	Organisation	Contact

INSERT YOUR CONTACT DETAILS HERE

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The Working Together Agreement promotes a coordinated approach to early childhood inclusion for children with disability and/or developmental delay. When families, early childhood intervention (ECI) practitioners, early childhood education and care (ECEC) educators work together; this supports the human rights, best interests of and outcomes for all children participating in ECEC settings.

“Every child is entitled to access and participate in early childhood education and care programs which recognise them as active agents in their own lives and learning, respond to them as individuals, respect their families as partners and engage with their diverse backgrounds and cultures.”

Joint Position Statement on the Inclusion of Children with a Disability in Early Childhood Education and Care, ECA and ECIA, 2012.



The Working Together Agreement resource is the property of Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA).

This resource was developed by ECIA NSW/ACT, with the assistance of the following reference group members.



This resource was developed by ECIA NSW/ACT.



Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority



Early Childhood Australia  
New South Wales Branch



INFORM • INFLUENCE • INSPIRE



Family & Community Services

With support from Ageing Disability and Home Care (ADHC) in the NSW Department of Family and Community Services.

# What roles does each member of a child's team play in a good partnership?



An important starting point to working together effectively is for each person involved in a child's team to understand the roles and responsibilities played by all involved.

## ECEC educators:

- explain their responsibilities in relation to Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) to families and ECI practitioners.
- should confidently share their philosophy and practical considerations about inclusion and what can be reasonably expected in the service.
- share their observations and documentation of the child's learning in the ECEC context with families and ECI practitioners.
- collaborate with other organisations and service providers to enhance children's learning and wellbeing.
- provide information to the ECI practitioner about areas they would like support with and when it would be most helpful for visits to occur.
- share information about the setting's routines and experiences of the setting with the ECI practitioner so their strategies can be embedded more easily.
- ask for strategies that can be embedded into play and everyday routines with other children.
- implement agreed strategies at relevant times in the ECEC setting.

## Families:

- know their child best.
- talk to all involved in their child's life about their priorities for their child.
- share insights and perspectives about what works well and any other relevant information.
- need to be involved in clarifying responsibilities for members of a child's team and adopting a joint problem solving approach.
- usually want to know about their child's progress and participation in the ECEC setting.



Learning from the family about their knowledge of and priorities for their child's participation in an ECEC setting is essential for all professionals. ECI and ECEC practitioners can then plan the most practical ways to embed and monitor strategies based on family priorities to support the child's inclusion within the ECEC context.





## ECI practitioners:

- need to understand that the ECEC setting has its own curriculum and legal obligations for the education and care of all children in the form of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and National Quality Standard (NQS).
- need to be mindful that they may be one of a number of ECI practitioners visiting the ECEC setting.
- need to get a good sense of how an ECEC setting works so that strategies suggested are realistic in the context of an educator's responsibility for a large group of children.
- learn from, talk and plan with ECEC staff about how to best work in partnership to support the child's inclusion within the context of the setting.
- should work with the child in the social context during visits to ECEC settings.
- collaboratively develop a small number of strategies that can be embedded in the ECEC's everyday program, practice and routines in realistic, practical ways.
- may co-ordinate the child's individual program that supports the child to develop skills that enhance their participation and access in the inclusive setting.
- need to work with children within view of early childhood educators as a requirement of child protection regulations.



ECIs and ECECs have shared goals around the rights and best interests of all children, their development, meaningful participation, learning, capacity building and wellbeing. Clarifying how we work together is an important aspect of supporting children's inclusion in ECEC settings.



# How can we best work together?

## All professionals need to:

- incorporate the family’s priorities for their child into all planning.
- reflect on how they are working towards family priorities.
- understand the rights of all children and advocate for their best interests.
- share understanding and knowledge of how they work to build capacity of all involved.
- observe, document and monitor children’s progress.
- provide feedback on the outcomes of agreed strategies.

## Outline specific roles and actions

- Determine roles and responsibilities for specific actions.
- Where possible, have one ECI practitioner nominated to be the main person working with the family and early childhood service and avoiding multiple ECI practitioners visiting for each child unless this is necessary and agreed with the team (sometimes this is referred to as a “key worker”).
- Ongoing communication:
  - Set up a communication system (such as a communication book or use of email) that works for all involved to share important information and progress and to ask questions.
  - Arrange to communicate regularly to monitor and review how the partnership is working, goals, child participation and progress, and make any changes.





Inclusion is a right for all children based on international, Australian Federal and state legislation and conventions. Links to documents which outline children's rights and ECI and ECEC obligations are provided below.

## What are our legal obligations?

- **The Australian Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992** protects the rights of all children to participate in education regardless of their ability.  
[www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00763](http://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2016C00763)
- In NSW, the **Disability Inclusion Act** outlines our legal responsibilities to include all children.  
[www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2014/41](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/act/2014/41)



## How does this agreement meet our ECI and ECEC professional practice standards?

- Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA) and Early Childhood Australia (ECA) have developed a **Joint position statement on the inclusion of children with disability in ECEC settings**, which can be downloaded here:  
[www.ecia.org.au](http://www.ecia.org.au)
- For ECEC educators this working together agreement relates to the **National Quality Standard**. For more information see the National Quality Standard  
[www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/the-national-quality-standard](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/the-national-quality-standard)
- The **Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)** (DEEWR, 2009) is a core part of the NQF and provides a strong theoretical and philosophical foundation for respecting diversity and acting for equity and inclusion for all children in ECEC programs. The EYLF can be downloaded here:  
[http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/belonging\\_being\\_and\\_becoming\\_the\\_early\\_years\\_learning\\_framework\\_for\\_australia.pdf](http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf)
- **Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics** is a set of statements about appropriate and expected behaviour of early childhood professionals.  
[www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/)
- Australia has a duty to ensure that the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC)** are upheld for all children. For more information see:  
[www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx)
- For ECI practitioners, the **Children's Standards in Action** outlines the requirements for all ECI service providers:  
[www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/\\_\\_\\_data/assets/file/0018/314406/Addendum\\_GuideServicesWorkingWithCYP-AH14-262062.pdf](http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/___data/assets/file/0018/314406/Addendum_GuideServicesWorkingWithCYP-AH14-262062.pdf)
- **The National Guidelines - Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention** outlines best practice recommendations and standards:  
[www.ecia.org.au](http://www.ecia.org.au)



# The Agreement

## Signatures:

All involved in a child's team are encouraged to sign this Agreement, including:

- parent(s)/carer(s)
- ECEC practitioners (e.g. Director/educator(s)/other)
- ECI practitioners (e.g. key worker, special educator, therapist).

Parent/carer's signature: ..... Parent/carer's name: .....

Relationship to child: ..... Date: .....

Professional's signature: ..... Professional's name: .....

Position: ..... Organisation: .....

Date: .....

Professional's signature: ..... Professional's name: .....

Position: ..... Organisation: .....

Date: .....

Professional's signature: ..... Professional's name: .....

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Date: .....

Professional's signature: ..... Professional's name: .....

Position: ..... Organisation: .....

Date: .....

# The Agreement

## Signatures continued:

All involved in a child's team are encouraged to sign this Agreement, including:

- parent(s)/carer(s)
- ECEC practitioners (e.g. Director/educator(s)/other)
- ECI practitioners (e.g. key worker, special educator, therapist).

Parent/carer's signature: ..... Parent/carer's name: .....

Relationship to child: ..... Date: .....

Professional's signature: ..... Professional's name: .....

Position: ..... Organisation: .....

Date: .....

Professional's signature: ..... Professional's name: .....

Position: ..... Organisation: .....

Date: .....



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