

Finding Common Ground

A place of agreement to focus on, together



A map for working better together

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) services are social settings where children learn through play and relationships with their peers and adults.

What does inclusion look and feel like in an ECEC setting?

- ▶ Children playing and learning with their peers.
- ▶ Children feeling a sense of belonging.
- ▶ Children making choices for themselves.
- ▶ Everyone understanding and valuing different ways of thinking and being.
- ▶ The inclusion team reflecting on and changing attitudes, environments and strategies so that every child can participate meaningfully.

Common ground is a place of agreement.



It is where different people with different perspectives work out what they agree on and can focus on together, no matter how small. A focus could be a problem or challenge, a skill, a goal or a child outcome. Finding this common ground creates opportunities for the inclusion team to think about what is important for a child's learning and development and to decide on shared priorities.

Each inclusion team member brings something different to the team.

Working together as an inclusion team involves understanding and valuing the strengths and perspectives that each inclusion team member brings.

Child,
Siblings
and Peers

- Provide the important 'voice' of the child: *what the child wants; is interested in; likes and dislikes; and is uniquely important to them.*
- Contribute the 'voice' of siblings and peers who may engage with the child in play, learning and relationships at the ECEC service and home.

A team with the child includes the voice of the child, the adults supporting them, as well as their siblings and peers.

Family
and Carers

- Know their child best.
- Have knowledge, understanding and experience of their child's strengths, interests, family and friends, likes and dislikes and how to best support and communicate with them.
- Engage with the child and any siblings in the child's primary natural, everyday environment of the home. They also engage with their child in other community settings.

Early
Childhood
Education
and Care
Services

- Support families and promote the inclusion of all children as part of their everyday, quality practice.
- Provide an important natural, everyday environment for children to play, learn, develop and thrive.
- Have expertise and experience to share about how children play and learn in a group setting.
- Have collaborative partnerships with families, other professionals and communities.

Early
Childhood
Intervention
Professionals

- Provide specialised support and services to children with developmental differences.
- Support families and ECEC services to build a child's capacity within their natural, everyday environments.
- Have early childhood intervention expertise and strategies to share.
- Adapt their practices between clinical and natural, everyday environments.
- Have collaborative partnerships with families and other professionals.

Child's name:at

ECEC Service:




1. Talk with other inclusion team members.

- ▶ Share your hopes, needs, problems, thinking, goals and ideas for supporting (child).
- ▶ Agree on what you think is important for (child)'s learning and development.

2. Talk about (child)'s learning, development and inclusion at this ECEC service and decide what you can focus on together.

- ▶ Your focus could be a problem or challenge, a skill, a goal or a child outcome.
- ▶ The focus could involve any of the inclusion team members. *E.g.: it could be about improving communication between the ECEC service and the family.*
- ▶ When the focus is specific to (child), consider what this means both **to** (child) and **for** (child). *E.g.: to make friends; to participate in outdoor play; to use the toilet unassisted; to take turns in a game and to identify their name.*
- ▶ Use the shared conversation resources available in *Inclusion Together* for ideas to support your conversations.



Ideas shared and discussed that the inclusion team could focus on:

3. Prioritise what the inclusion team will work on together, to strengthen (child)'s learning, development and inclusion in this ECEC setting.

- ▶ Define this **shared priority** as specifically as you can. *What? How? When? Where?*

Our inclusion team's shared priority is (could be more than one):

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4. Work together to achieve this shared priority.



- ▶ Progress to the next part of your *Inclusion Together* journey: **Agree on the path forward: Agree on next steps and 'who does what'.**
- ▶ Brainstorm how the team could work together and use the strengths of all team members to work on this priority.
- ▶ Check that planned actions align with [Best Practice](#).

If the inclusion team can't agree on a shared priority:



- ▶ Talk further to share perspectives and brainstorm ideas and solutions.
- ▶ Consider how you could better understand the different perspectives of your team.
- ▶ Would considering what's important **to** (child) help the team's decision-making?
- ▶ Is there one thing you agree on or one small step that could be taken?
- ▶ Can you seek external support to help the team to decide on a shared priority?
- ▶ Refer to *Inclusion Together* [HELP](#) or go to <https://inclusionagency NSWACT.org.au/about/inclusion-together>