



## **Early Intervention - The Family Policy**

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## 1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline Down South Therapy's (DST) approach and commitment to ensuring that each family receives family-centred supports that are culturally inclusive, responsive and focus on their strengths.

## 1.2. Scope

This policy relates to all Down South Therapy activities and applies to all employees, contractors, students, advocates, Directors and others who may act on behalf of Down South Therapy.

*This Policy reflects requirements in:*

- NDIS Practice Standards and Quality Indicators 2021
- NDIS Act 2013
- ECIA National Guidelines – Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention 2016
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990
- UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities 2006
- Children and Community Services Act 2004

*Related Policies:*

1.6 Individual Beliefs and Values – CALD Communities

1.7 Individual Beliefs and Values – ATSI People

5.03 Support Planning

7.01 Early Childhood Supports Policy

7.03 The Family Policy

7.04 Inclusion Policy

7.05 Collaboration Policy

7.06 Capacity Building Policy

## 1.1. The Family – Outcomes and Quality Indicators

### Outcome

At DST, each family receives family-centred supports that are culturally inclusive, responsive, and focus on their strengths.

### Quality Indicators

- Each support plan is based on child and family choice and control and is undertaken with the family.
- The family's expertise and knowledge about their child is recognised and respected.
- The family's strengths, needs and priorities are identified by working in partnership with the family.
- Each support plan is flexible and individualised to reflect the child's and family members' preferences and learning styles.
- Each support plan is culturally responsive and respectful of the family's cultural beliefs and their community.
- Information and supports are provided in a clear, easy to understand and flexible manner by integrating the support into the child's everyday routine.
- The strengths of the family are promoted and developed and the family is assisted to develop their own network of formal and informal resources, with recognition that positive outcomes for children do not rely solely on therapeutic child-focused programs.
- Work is undertaken with the family to inform and strengthen their participation in, and contribution to, the child's learning and development.

## 1.2. Definitions

### Family Centred Practice

As defined in the ECIA National Guidelines – Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention 2016, Family Centred Practice is “a set of values, skills, behaviours and knowledge that recognises the central role of families in children’s lives. Family-centred practice is a way of thinking and acting that ensures that professionals and families work in partnership and that family life, and family priorities and choices, drive what happens in planning and intervention. Family-centred practice builds on family strengths and assists families to develop their own networks of resources – both informal and formal.”

### Strengths Based Practice

As defined in the ECIA National Guidelines – Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention 2016, Strengths Based Practice “builds on family members’ competencies; supports families to make decisions for themselves; and focuses on empowering families to do things for themselves within their social communities. Rather than focusing on correcting peoples’ weaknesses or problems, capacity-building and strength-based strategies recognise the assets and talents of people and help people use these competencies to strengthen functioning”

### Culturally Responsive Practice

As defined in the ECIA National Guidelines – Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention 2016, Culturally Responsive Practice “creates welcoming and culturally inclusive environments where all families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to children’s learning and development. Practitioners are knowledgeable and respectful of diversity and provide services and supports in flexible ways that are responsive to each family’s cultural, ethnic, racial, language and socioeconomic characteristics.”

## 1.3. Family Centred and Strengths Based Practice

DST recognises that Family Centred Practice and Strengths Based Practice is established best practice for working with children with disabilities or developmental delay. Family centred practice is linked with improved developmental outcomes for the child through increasing parent self-efficacy. DST recognises that:

- Each family is unique and different
- The family is the constant in the child’s life and therefore have the greatest ability to improve developmental outcomes
- The family are the expert on the child’s abilities and needs
- Optimal child functioning occurs within a supportive family and community context and is affected by the stress and coping of other family members.

At DST:

- Each family have the opportunity to decide the level of involvement they wish in the decision making for their child
- Parents have ultimate responsibility for their child
- Each family member is treated with respect
- The strengths and needs of all family members are supported and encouraged
- Family members are involved in all levels of support from support planning, service delivery and service review.
- All families are given the option of service delivery models from Key Worker Model to Transdisciplinary Models and can change between the two or have variations of both depending on what best suits the family.
- Each family is given the choice of creating an Individual Service Plan for their child, with the plan remaining flexible and being reviewed every quarter.
- Therapy supports are delivered in a location best suited to the family and the child, and can be at home, early education providers, school or in the local community.

- All supports are culturally inclusive and respectful of the family’s cultural beliefs. Further culturally responsive policies can be found in Policy 1.6 Individual Beliefs and Values – CALD Communities and 1.7 Individual Beliefs and Values – ATSI People.
- Use of interpreters and translation of information in other languages are provided when needed.
- All plans and programs are created with the family’s strengths and routines in mind so that they can be easily integrated into the child’s everyday routine.
- DST offers various service models that are socio-economic inclusive, including the use of therapy assistants, home programs, community resources and training of key stakeholders to deliver services.
- DST provides information to families around local formal and informal supports that they can utilise in addition to therapeutic supports. These are delivered on an individual basis during therapy sessions, during the onboarding process and distributed on social media.

#### **1.4. Review of the Policy**

This policy will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis. However, if at any time the legislative, policy or funding environment is so altered that the policy is no longer appropriate in its current form, the policy will be reviewed immediately and amended accordingly