



Early Intervention - Collaboration Policy

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1.1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that each child receives coordinated supports from a collaborative team comprising their family, the provider and other relevant providers, to facilitate their development and address the family's needs and priorities.

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 2020
- 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:

2.01 Community Participation and Inclusion Policy

5.01 Service Access and Exit Policy

5.03 Support Planning Policy

5.04 Continuity of Supports

7.01 Early Childhood Supports Policy

7.02 The Child

7.03 The Family Policy

7.05 Collaboration Policy

7.06 Capacity Building Policy

1.1. Collaboration – Outcomes and Quality Indicators

Outcome

Each participant receives coordinated supports from a collaborative team comprising their family, the provider, and other relevant providers, to facilitate their development and address the family's needs and priorities.

Quality Indicators

- If the family wishes to engage a key worker, work is undertaken with the family and other providers to identify a suitable key worker.
- Close collaborative links with the family and other collaborating providers are established to coordinate the team around each child.
- With the consent of the family, information, knowledge, and skills are communicated and shared between the family, the provider, and other collaborating providers.
- Where relevant, collaboration between supports and services is undertaken to ensure that transition/exit planning meets the needs of each child and their family.

1.2. Definitions

Collaborative Teamwork Practice

As defined in the ECIA National Guidelines – Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention 2016, Collaborative Teamwork Practice “is where the family and professionals work together as a collaborative and integrated team around the child, communicating and sharing information, knowledge and skills, with one team member nominated as a key worker and main person working with the family”.

1.3. Providing Collaborative Teamwork Procedures

The following procedures are implemented to ensure that Down South Therapy meets its policy objective of ensuring that each child receives coordinated supports from a collaborative team comprising their family, the provider and other relevant providers, to facilitate their development and address the family’s needs and priorities.

At DST:

- Family members and professionals work together as a collaborative, integrated, coordinated team with the common goal of facilitating participation of a child and family in everyday community environments.
- All families are given the choice of model of service delivery including Key Worker Model and Transdisciplinary Team Model or a variation of both to suit the needs of the child and family.
- During support planning the therapists work with the family to determine what are the most important outcomes for the child and the family, which at times may be different to the goals the therapist has identified.
- Staff involved in Key Worker Model of support delivery will be receive training and be competent in understanding child development.
- Families are provided with information on best practice in Early Intervention and the Key Worker Model of support delivery.
- Where families chose to have a Key Worker and need specific expertise, the key worker will liaise with the family to bring in other team members as appropriate.
- Families can transfer between models of service delivery at any time and will be formally reviewed every quarter in conjunction with an Individual Service Plan review.
- Communication with the family and other collaborating providers is open and continuous and with respect to the family’s needs and wishes.
- Collaborative meetings can be face to face, or remotely over the phone or on Zoom or Teams software.
- Feedback from the family is on a continuous basis as well as during times of formal review when the Individual Service Plans are reviewed.
- All communication with internal and external collaborative team members will be with the consent of the family.
- DST Therapists work closely with the family and collaborating providers to share information, knowledge and skills including upskilling of those caregivers and stakeholders as directed by the family.
- To enable collaboration and at times continuity of service, with consent of the care giver, other stakeholders involved with the family will be detailed on the child’s Individual Service Plan.
- Where it is identified that the needs of the family will be best suited with another service provider, DST will participate in a collaborative handover process to make a smooth transition. (See DST Policies 5.01 Service Access and Exit Policy and 5.04 Continuity of Supports Policy for more information).
- Where other therapists need to take over the Key Worker or another therapy position with the family, a written and verbal handover will be given as well as shadowing opportunities to make the transition seamless.

- Where families exit DST Services, feedback will be sought from the family to assist with service quality improvement.
- All therapy support and programs will be aimed at upskilling and building the capacity of the care giver so that future reliance on therapy is decreased.

1.4. Skills of a Key Worker

A DST Key Worker as part of a collaborative team needs to have both expertise and experience in ECI practice to work effectively in the key worker role. Key Workers are able to:

- Work with families and other significant adults and apply evidence-based parent and parenting support using adult learning practices such as coaching and building on relationships based on trust and respect
- Need a sound base of the skills and knowledge of their own profession
- Require a sound understanding of child development
- Consult with other team members and children's services.

At times a Key Worker may work with families whilst building these skills. All Key Workers who are in the skill building phase whilst working with families will be supported by a Senior Therapist on a weekly to fortnightly basis to assist Key Worker service delivery and skill development.

1.5. 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