

Early Childhood Intervention Policy

V2.1 | Last Reviewed: 3/04/2023

Purpose and Scope

We value the clients and their stakeholders using our service, and our service often includes children under the age of 8 years. EnableOT is proactive in promoting an environment of safety, equity, diversity and inclusion for children and their families accessing our service. This policy expresses how we provide services which:

- Are person-centred;
- Respect children's needs and legal rights;
- Promote family strength in a collaborative, responsive manner
- Demonstrate inclusion and culturally competency
- Encourage meaningful participation in family and community life
- Ensure supports are delivered in line with customer expectations
- Comply with legislative requirements including child safe reporting

Legislative Requirements

NDIS Act 2013 (The Act)

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was developed to enable people with disability to live 'an ordinary life' as others in society do. The associated Act aims to provide for the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Australia, support the independence and social and economic participation of people with disability, provide reasonable and necessary supports, including early intervention supports, for clients in the National Disability Insurance Scheme launch, enable people with disability to exercise choice and control in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their supports, facilitate the development of a nationally consistent approach to the access to, and the planning and funding of, supports for people with disability, promote the provision of high quality and innovative supports that enable people with disability to maximise independent lifestyles and full inclusion in the mainstream community, raise community awareness of the issues that affect the social and economic participation of people with disability, and facilitate greater community inclusion of people with disability.

Child and Family-Centred Supports

EnableOT provides family-centred supports where the child is at the centre. We focus on what matters most to the child understanding that the family and the wider stakeholder network are important mediators of safety and developmental well-being for a child.

This policy is in addition to the *Positive Support Policy* which outlines EnableOT commitments including:

- Ensuring child is at the centre, supported by the family and wider stakeholder network to inform and clarify needs of the child
- Encouraging open partnerships and collaboration between service providers, family, stakeholders and child
- Promoting a holistic approach to the child where all needs are known and considered with a focus on the strengths of the family and relevant stakeholders
- Respecting and valuing diversity and culturally relevant therapeutic competencies in families we support (as outlined in the *Positive Support Policy*)

Therefore:

- The wishes of the client and their family are respected including to have a voice regarding informed choices
- We can flexibly assist the development needs of a child by providing a high density of preferred events that contribute to stated goals and outcomes and include the wider community and peers where culturally, developmentally and socially appropriate

To do this we commit to following the principles:

- We ensure our supports and services are in line with the needs of the child and the goals and desires of family and other stakeholders
- We listen to the child and those who know them best to understand what they want for their lives including specific outcomes, so everyone knows what success looks like
- We support each child and their family to identify and minimize barriers to success through steps and goals that assist in achieving outcomes
- We ensure our workers are trained, supported and motivated to follow the principles of this policy

Diversity

Diversity is an important factor in the success of EnableOT as it helps to foster a culture that is open to all and reflects positive values. As a service, diversity helps us to promote innovation and creativity as well as build a meaningful connection between our service and the people we support as well as building a developmental sense of identity for the child at the centre of supports.

Within culturally and social diversity, the family is supported to have as much control as possible in areas of their child's life by exercising and being supported in an informed decision-making process for their child as outlined in *Positive Supports Policy*. EnableOT is committed to supporting and recording decision-making in a way that best reflects the wishes and needs of the child, family and stakeholders.

Aspects of diversity, plus preferences for service delivery are noted in the **Client Support Profile**, which is then used as an ongoing reference tool. The profile is updated regularly (at minimum every 6 months at the scheduled **Formal Client Review- Ongoing**, but sooner if new preferences are identified).

Client Support Plans

EnableOT is committed to ensuring outcomes for clients are maximised and achieved. One way to achieve this is for child, family and other relevant parties to have ongoing involvement in the development of 'living' **Client Support Plan** that outlines individual goals and notes the interventions, efforts and progress made towards accomplishing those goals. It is flexible to add more goals, changing the focus to higher priorities at different times to reflect the constantly changing circumstances of family life and uniquely developing children.

Participation

EnableOT will make sure the child, family and stakeholders remain connected to communities that promote meaningful engagement and that the child and their families can be as much part of their communities as they want to be. To do this we will:

- ask and work with the child, family and stakeholders, to plan how best to maintain the child's involvement in relevant community activities
- we will always start by listening to what each child, family and stakeholders want to do, and then plan what supports are needed
- regularly review, with the client and their stakeholders, how well the and EnableOT's services are working around community involvement and respond to the feedback in collaboration with the client, their stakeholders and the supports provided
- EnableOT will, at every available opportunity, seek the views of clients and their stakeholders using our services
- Work collaboratively with support networks, both formal and informal to ensure meaningful participation in family and community life

Feedback

EnableOT welcomes all feedback including complaints regarding its service to ensure all opportunity to improve our business, minimise risk and increase customer satisfaction.

- Families are invited to provide feedback via a link to an online **Feedback Form** sent to them as part of the **Welcome to Enable SMS** - have an opportunity to provide information and feedback on all aspects of the services they are receiving at any time.
- At the time of onboarding their preference for how often to ask for feedback will be determined and noted on the **Client Support Profile**
- Family feedback information is documented and informs the service's annual planning and review process
- The service maintains a record of all complaints and their outcomes

See *Feedback, Complaints and Continuous Improvement Policy* for further information on Feedback and Complaints from clients.

Ensuring the Safety of the Child

EnableOT encourages people using our services to have family stakeholders who support them and have meaningful relationships with them to support social, physical and neurological development.

We are Child Safe

EnableOT is committed to the safeguarding of children and young people and are uniquely placed to identify and respond to needs and vulnerabilities of harm of these age groups with a disability.

To safeguard these age-groups we commit to:

- maintain professional and courteous relationship with the child and their family
- listen to and involve children in decisions that may affect them
- respect the diversity, equity and inclusion of children and young people under the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child, legislation relating to children and young people; follow mandatory reporting requirements when risk of harm is suspected
- safeguard children and young people always and not place them in an environment where they are at risk of abuse, harm or unsafe behaviour
- use appropriate communication with children and young people avoiding confronting or confusing topics and degrading or humiliating actions or words
- do not smoke while on duty, and not attend work while influenced by alcohol or drugs

EnableOT will maintain rigorous worker screening policies in line with the NDIS standards and requirements and discuss our policies openly with staff and volunteers as well as clients and their families. Failure to disclose offences that may affect children or the failure to protect children and young persons from risk of harm or abuse will be considered a breach of this policy and may result in disciplinary action; a serious breach may be considered a criminal offence.

The Child is Safe

EnableOT takes observation or disclosure of hazards and incidents seriously and follows a clear procedure to manage the risks and protect the child or their stakeholders. Such events trigger an entry in the **Mobile Data App: Event Of Concern Project** (hereafter referred to as the **EOC App**). Working through the entry takes the EnableOT team member through the assessment of risks, recording of details, notification requirements to EnableOT Management and mandatory reporting to statutory bodies such as The Department of Child Safety, and the NDIS Commission.

See the *Prevent and Respond to Harm Policy* for specific details of this process.

Continuity of Supports

Support Changes

EnableOT will have arrangements in place to minimize the risk of cancellation or being unable to provide scheduled supports. Day to day operations will be managed efficiently to avoid staff disruption and to ensure specific needs and planned well and met in line with client expectations. Where changes are unavoidable, we will contact the client at the earliest opportunity and openly discuss alternative arrangements and seek the approval of the client.

Disaster Planning

EnableOT will assist as appropriate-to-need in ensuring the daily living needs, critical health care and safety of children on our caseload and their families. This is done by ascertaining which Disaster Care Category the family falls into and supporting the preparation of disaster planning as a result, as per the details contained in the *Positive Supports Policy*.

Additional Considerations

Each client has the right to access supports free from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination. Refer to the *Prevent and Respond to Harm Policy* for more information on how EnableOT provides a harm-free environment.
Review

This policy will be reviewed when required by changes to legislation or when organisation operations require it. Employees and clients may be consulted in relation to any proposed changes. It is recommended that this policy be assessed at 9 monthly internal review alternating with formal auditing processes.