

Preschool Field Officer Service Newsletter Term Three 2018

AREA LEADER UPDATE

Hello Educators,

Term four is just around the corner and so is the roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in the Western Region of Melbourne. The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) has been announced as the local Early Childhood Early Intervention Partner and will soon be opening an office in Wyndham. Families and educators can start contacting the BSL now to seek information.



During our visits to services we are finding that there are still a number of educators who are not aware of NDIS and how it will change the early intervention support system for families.

Please remember to continue to refer to Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECIS) right up to the 30th of September. If a child is deemed eligible for early intervention and is on the waiting list for services, they will automatically transfer over to the NDIS system. Referring to ECIS now will ensure a smooth transition for the child and the family from early intervention to the NDIS. If the child is referred after the 30th of September to NDIS, the process may be a little more difficult to navigate for some families.

For those children who are current early intervention clients and receiving services, please ensure families are aware of who they are funded through, i.e. Scope, Yooralla, Gateways, Noahs Ark. This information will be asked during the initial phone call that they receive from the NDIA.

Children receiving HCWA (Helping Children with Autism Funding) or Better Start Funding (Funding for children under 6 years with a Disability) will continue to receive funding until their NDIS Plan is approved.

Remember:

- NDIS is about choice and control
- One or more area of delay that requires a team of support is necessary for NDIS eligibility.
- The family will need to provide evidence that the child needs a team of support.
- As long as the family has evidence that the child is impacted, diagnosis is not necessary.
- The family doctor and child's educator can provide this evidence.
- For more information go to <https://ndis.gov.au/ecei>

Help families to prepare for their NDIS journey:

- The NDIS will make contact with the family by telephone – this may appear as an ‘unknown number’ or ‘private caller’. Please make families aware of this so they answer the call as the NDIS may not leave a message.
- Look at the price guide on the NDIS website – this tells you what is funded or not funded
- The NDIS planner will ask about informal supports.
- The plan is based around these informal supports. For example: *can your mum (child's grandmother) who lives 5 minutes away be on call 24/7?*
- Encourage the family to start thinking about community and mainstream supports and what the barriers are to these supports.
- Encourage the family to think about what the impact is on the child's social participation.
- What does the family want the child to be involved in within the family? Establish this and work backwards to plan for how the child is going to get there.
- Empower the family to be specific with the goals - *e.g. I want my child to be able to participate in swimming lessons* - NDIS won't cover the cost of the swimming lessons but will fund the additional person that has to get in the pool with the child.
- What is the difference/gap between the child and another child without additional needs?
- What is reasonable and necessary for the child to live an ordinary life?

This edition of the newsletter covers some tips and strategies for guiding behaviour as well as additional information about the NDIS. Please encourage families to contact the Brotherhood of St Laurence for further information or to ask questions that they may have.

Narelle Keleher, PSFO Area Leader



Blow bubbles
(Deep breathing)



Bear hug
(Releases muscle
tension)



Read old favorites
(Comfort & connection)



Color Together
(Relax mind and
muscles)

8 Ways to Help an Anxious Child



Mindful walk
(Exercise & fresh air)



Get out and play
(Releases muscle
tension)

The Happy Kid Handbook
Katie Hurley, LCSW



Create a cozy spot
(Relaxation zone)



Bubble bath
(Muscle relaxation)

Understanding and Guiding Challenging Behaviour

“Charlotte has at least 10 tantrums a day, it is so frustrating”

“Billy is so aggressive towards his peers; the other children don’t want to play anywhere near him”

“Nicholas drives me crazy at group times, he is disruptive and demands all the attention”

Comments like these are frequently heard in Early Childhood services. At times, young children may display challenging behaviours that can lead to overwhelmed and frustrated educators. It is important to remember that behaviour is a child’s way of communicating.

This newsletter edition addresses key components to achieving successful outcomes when guiding children’s challenging behaviour:

Prevention Strategies
Self-Reflection
Determining the Function of the Behaviour

Prevention strategies from the start of the year, all year!

Preventing challenging behaviour is the most positive way to guide it. There are many ways you can help to prevent challenging behaviour in an early childhood setting:

- ❖ Set up and follow a consistent daily routine. Whilst there will always be some days where flexibility is required due to unforeseen occurrences, sticking to a similar daily routine delivers reassurance to children who may be feeling uneasy. Try displaying the routine visually and frequently refer to it throughout the day. Draw the children with behavioural challenges to it more frequently.
- ❖ Ensure there is a Calm Area set up in both the indoor and outdoor spaces **all year long**. Make the areas soft, calming and inviting. Rotate a variety of calming and sensory items in the areas to motivate children. Ensure educators are available to guide children to use the areas appropriately. Consider creating group rules on how to use the areas with the understanding that it is a safe space to access when children aren’t feeling quite right. Try and step in and encourage children to access the areas when you see their emotions & behaviour starting to spike; once a tantrum has commenced it may be too tricky to guide them to a calm area.
- ❖ Intentionally teach all children about feelings and emotions **all year long**. Regularly Implement a variety of fun and interesting activities that involve recognising and labelling feelings and emotions. There may be children who are simply not interested in the feelings books and puzzles, therefore think creatively of ways to introduce emotions into these children’s interests.
- ❖ Teaching emotions is vital as it leads to the ability to self-regulate. Self-regulation allows us to calm ourselves when we are distressed and pick ourselves up when we are low. Not all children learn this easily and some need extra support to grasp it. Having a solid understanding of feelings and emotions also helps to develop empathy, which is the foundation for social skill development.

Self-Reflection

It is vital that educators engage in regular self-reflection, which isn't always easy to do. Educators play a vital role in guiding children's behaviour and it is important to consider whether your interactions and reactions could be unintentionally contributing to the child's inappropriate behaviour. To help you reflect, ask yourself:

- Am I **remaining calm** when the student is engaging in inappropriate behaviour? Children often become more agitated and misbehave more when teachers raise their voices.
- Are my **expectations of the child realistic**? Is a child expected to sit still and participate in a 20 minute group time, when their attention span is only eight minutes and they learn best when they are moving around?
- Am I **giving attention to the child for negative behaviours** rather than positive behaviours? When the child who frequently misbehaves plays nicely, they are often left alone and educators 'enjoy it while it lasts.' However, this is the most crucial time to provide positive feedback to the child regarding the appropriate play.
- Am I **being consistent** with the student? Are all educators guiding behaviour using the same strategies? Perhaps you come to work feeling somewhat unwell on a Monday morning and let a lot of behaviours slide. Then when the child engages in the same behaviours on Tuesday or Wednesday, you become upset. Consider what messages does this send to the child?

Determining the function of the behaviour – *WHY* is it happening?

It is crucial to determine why a child is engaging in inappropriate behaviour before deciding how to intervene appropriately. To determine the function, educators should take frequent observations in a variety of settings that contain the antecedent, behaviour and outcome.

- ❖ Antecedent: What happened immediately before the behaviour, eg: child was redirected
- ❖ Behaviour: What did the child do in response to the antecedent? eg: scream, cry, kick
- ❖ Outcome: What immediately followed for the child? eg: child was scolded and told to move away


There are two basic behavioural functions– to obtain / get something such as attention, materials, or a beloved activity *or* to avoid / escape something – gain attention, materials, activity. Using a variety of observations, look for patterns that may indicate what the child is trying to obtain or avoid.

Case Study - Liam

Liam is a child in 4yo Kindergarten. Liam has frequent meltdowns which involve crying, hitting peers and hiding under tables. Liam's educators notice that he mostly plays alone, as other children seem afraid he will hurt them. Educators have also noticed that Liam's learning and development is progressing slower than his peers. They have concerns that his behaviour and emotions are inhibiting his learning and social development.

Liam's educators decide to take some data to determine the function to Liam's frequent meltdowns. They consistently track the antecedents and outcomes, along with the behaviour over a 3 weeks period. They then sit together as a team and analyse the data for possible patterns.

A few likely functions are obvious to the Educators, such as obtaining attention from peers, obtaining sensory input into the body and avoiding separation from Mum. However, the educators decide to address the pattern that showed up the most often: avoidance of transitions. The data showed that almost every time the routine of the day changed, Liam would engage in a meltdown.



Once an antecedent has been hypothesised, it is time to brainstorm ways to support the child to fulfil their needs in an appropriate way. For Liam, Educators implemented supportive strategies to assist him through transition times which he was finding extremely hard. They implemented multiple visual and verbal warnings, special jobs for Liam to do during transitions and a positive incentive was provided after each non-meltdown transition (e.g.: a sticker, or his favourite story) for him to work towards.

If the function of challenging behaviour is avoiding separation from parents, think about specific separation strategies/routines that could be trialled. If the function is obtaining attention from adults/peers, explicitly teach the child how to appropriately get attention from others (eg: tap arm, say excuse me) and provide social stories about how to enter/sustain play.

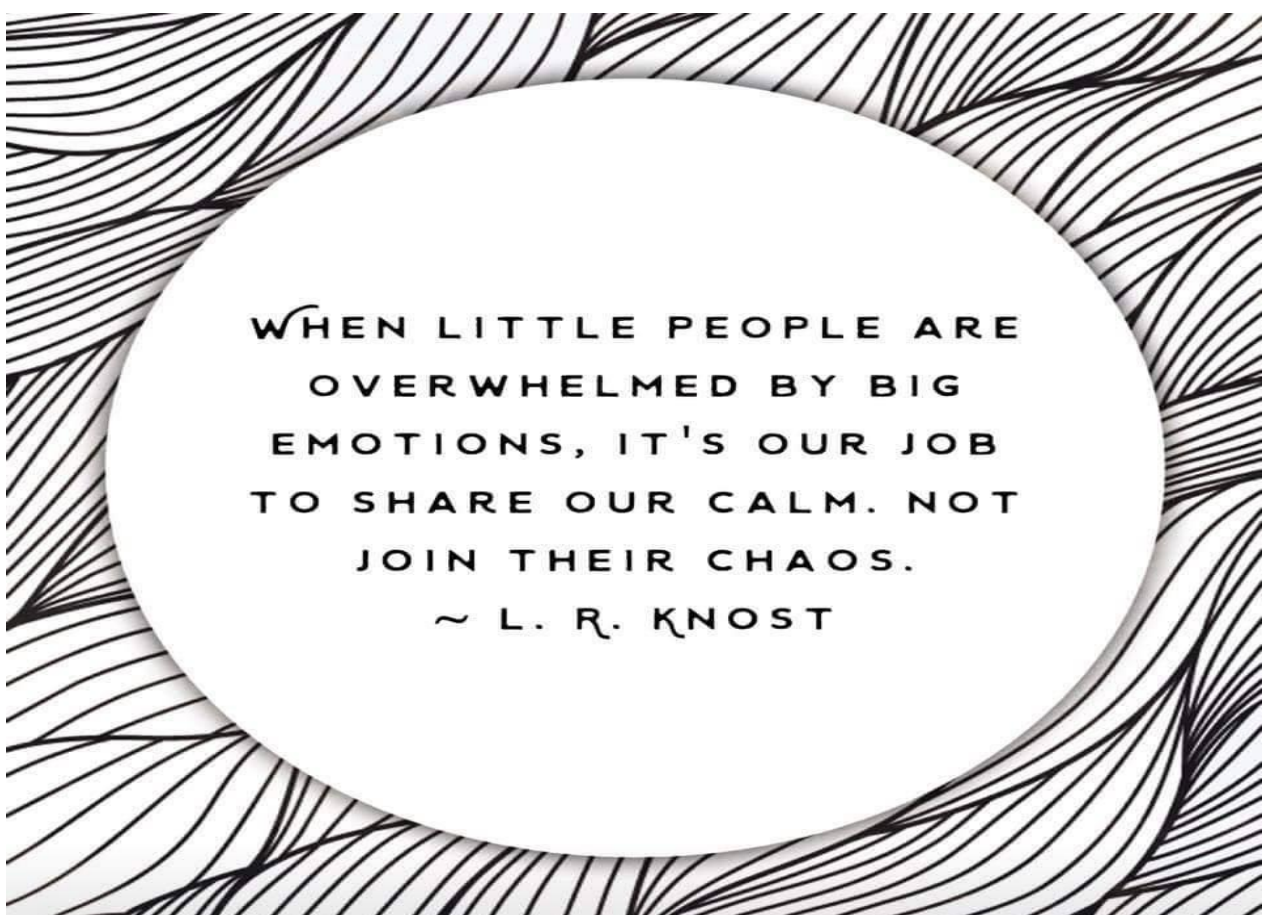
Keep in mind that when you introduce a behaviour intervention / new strategy, the challenging behaviour may temporarily spike and become worse. In the past, the child learnt that the behaviour worked to obtain or avoid the desired outcome, therefore they will often try the behaviour at a higher intensity to achieve those same desired outcomes. Stick with your interventions and consistent support strategies; behaviour spikes are usually only temporary.

References:

Understanding Behaviour Antecedents www.brookesinclusionlab.com

Emotional Self-Regulation: Techniques for Teaching <http://www.crisisprevention.com/Blog/October-2016/emotional-self-regulation>

Your Behaviour Plan made everything Worse! <https://bsci21.org/your-behavior-plan-made-everything-worse/>



WHEN LITTLE PEOPLE ARE
OVERWHELMED BY BIG
EMOTIONS, IT'S OUR JOB
TO SHARE OUR CALM. NOT
JOIN THEIR CHAOS.
~ L. R. KNOST



As from 1 October 2018, NDIS will commence rollout in Western Melbourne including – Wyndham, Brimbank, and Melton

Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI)

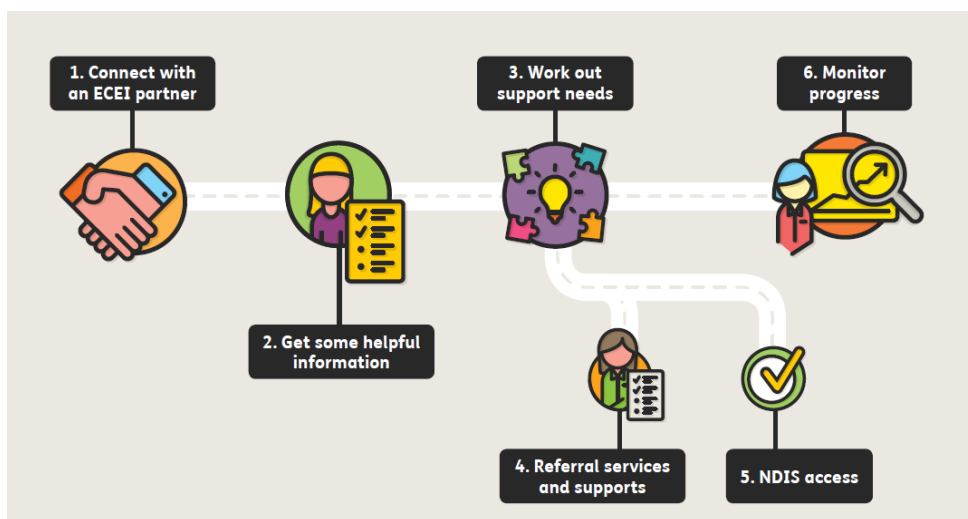
What is the Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) Approach?

The ECEI approach supports children and their families/carers aged 0-6 years who have a developmental delay or disability in one or more area. There is no requirement for a diagnosis or reports. The ECEI approach supports families to help children develop the skills they need to take part in daily activities and achieve the best possible outcomes throughout their life. The NDIS has engaged Early Childhood Partners around Australia to deliver the ECEI approach. Early Childhood Partners are experienced in providing early childhood intervention.

How does it work?

You can contact an Early Childhood Partner if you have concerns about a child's development. As every child is different, the Early Childhood Partner will tailor support to the child's individual needs and circumstances. They may also:

- Connect the family with the most appropriate supports in the area, such as the community health centre, educational setting and playgroup
- Provide some short-term early intervention where it has been identified as the most appropriate support
- Help the family to request NDIS access if the child requires longer-term early childhood intervention supports. If the child becomes an NDIS participant the Early Childhood Partner will work with the family to develop an NDIS plan.



The Brotherhood of St Laurence is the ECEI (Early Childhood Early Intervention) Partner in our area.



Brotherhood of St Laurence
Working for an Australia free of poverty

CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel - 1800 800 110 (NDIS) or 1300 275 323 (BROTHERHOOD OF ST LAURENCE)
Email - ecei.access@bsl.org.au Website – www.bsl.org.au or www.ndis.gov.au/ecei

REFERRAL: Referral Forms available on website

Translated forms are available – Interpreters available at intake – another useful website:

<https://www.ceh.org.au/ndis-and-cald-communities>

PLEASE CONTINUE TO REFER TO EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION SERVICES (ECIS) until 30 September as children receiving EI, or on the waiting list, will be the first to be transitioned across!