

Adapting the Embedded Learning Framework for Contextual and Cultural Fit

Inclusion Institute 2026

Tara McLaughlin, John Forster, Stephen Carberry, & Patricia Snyder

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Acknowledgements

Materials and resources for *Embedded Learning Support Aotearoa* are derivatives of

- Embedded Instruction for Early Learning

Materials and resources for *Embedded Learning Support Australia* are derivatives of

- Embedded Instruction for Early Learning and
- Embedded Learning Support Aotearoa

Materials have been developed in partnership with the Anita Zucker Center for Excellence in Early Childhood Studies, University of Florida; the Early Years Research Lab at Massey University; and Noah's Ark Inc; . Further derivatives or adaptations of the work are not permitted without written permission from the partners.

Overview of Part 2

By the end of today's Part 2 session, you will be able to

- Learn about the New Zealand and Australian context
- Reflect on the need for modifications and adaptations in different contexts (and cultures)
- View examples of adaptations and hear about the rationales
- Hear about projects to pilot, iterate, and grow Embedded Learning Support down under
- Have time for discussion about the adoption, adaptation, implementation, scale-up, and sustainability of the framework and practices.

Modification Versus Adaptation

- Modification
 - Umbrella term that encompasses any changes made to evidence-based interventions
- Adaptation
 - “**Thoughtful** and **deliberate** [intentional] alteration to the design or delivery of an intervention, with the goal of improving its fit or effectiveness in a given context” (Stirman et al., 2019)

Connecting to Down Under

Take a moment to think about:

- One thing you've heard or know about New Zealand
- One thing you've heard or know about Australia





Aotearoa New Zealand

- 5.3 million people
- ~300,000 children under the age of 5
- New Zealand is a bi-cultural and multi-cultural country: Superdiversity
 - 30% were born overseas
 - 18% Indigenous Māori
 - 9% Pacific peoples
 - Over 20% of population is multilingual
 - English, Sign and Te Reo all official languages
 - Over 150 languages spoken across the country
 - 25% of children experience poverty (material deprivation or hardship)





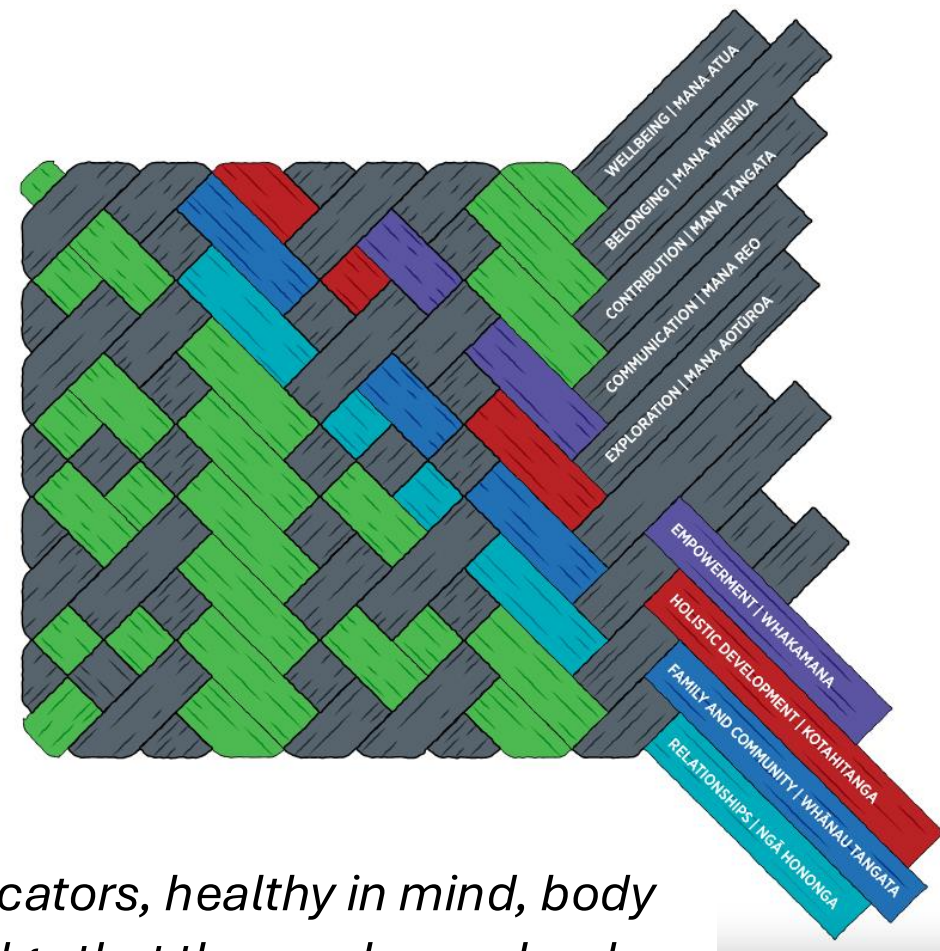
Early childhood education and care

- Diversity of early childhood education and care setting types
 - Unified under Ministry of Education
 - One set of regulations and curriculum for all teacher-led services
 - Historically, very child-centred and play-based practice
- Very limited early intervention support for children in ECE
 - Reluctance to refer (not seen as strengths-based)
 - Limited supports available (125 days is average wait time with over 5,000 children waiting for specialist support)



Te Whāriki (1996, 2017) Early Childhood Curriculum

- 4 guiding principles
- 5 learning strands
- 20 broad and flexible learning outcomes
- Designed for infants through start of school



“Children are competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society.”

*“Te Whāriki holds the promise that **all children** will be empowered to learn with and alongside others by engaging in experiences that have meaning for them.”*

He Pikorua o Te Tuapapa (Tiers of Support)

Framework for **identifying supports which increase in intensity**, depending on the needs and the context.

This supports educators to develop inclusive learning environments, **using a continuum of proactive responses** that support them intervening early in the life of the mokopuna (children), where the need for support has been identified.



Universal

Tier one



Strengthens inclusive practices and systems for all mokopuna, whānau and educators across all settings

Targeted

Tier two



Offers more deliberate and direct approaches to support mokopuna, whānau and educators

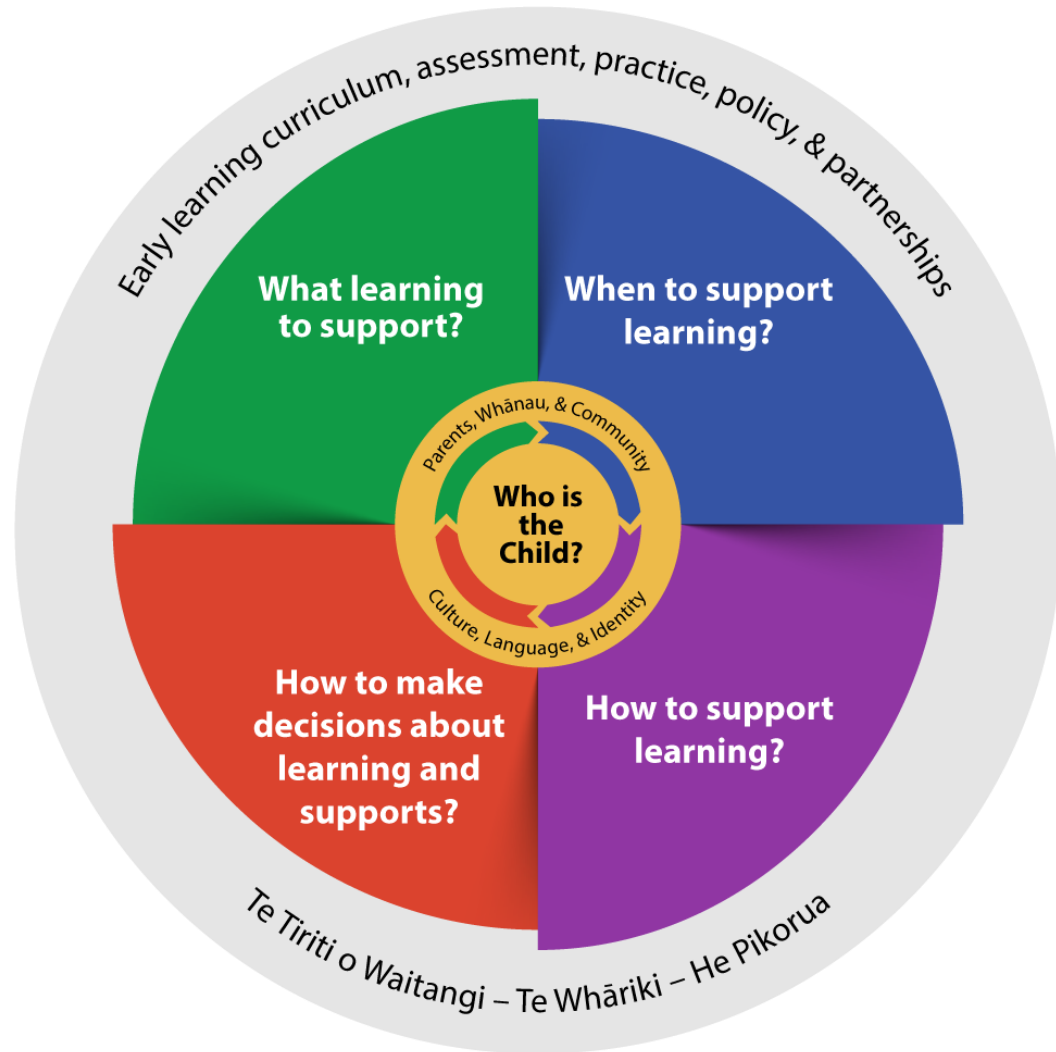
Individualised

Tier three



Provides more individualised supports tailored for the specific needs and circumstances of mokopuna, within their contexts

Embedded Learning Support



A multi-component approach to break down the steps of providing additional learning support in inclusive early learning settings to help all children be successful in their learning.

It support supports kaiako (teacher) and whānau (family) to feel confident and competent in the ways they support mokopuna (children).

5 Components	7 Embedded Learning Support Practices
Who is the child?	1) Work in partnership with families and whānau to use strengths-based information to guide embedded learning support.
What Learning to Support?	2) Identify and align target skills we will see or hear the child do into small steps to promote learning.
When to Support Learning?	3) Make a plan to embed learning opportunities during activities in which the target skill is a good fit.
How to Support Learning?	4) Adapt environments, activities, and routines to support a high-quality learning environment for all children.
	5) Plan and embed complete learning opportunities on target skills in ongoing play, activities, routines, and transitions.
How to Make Decisions about Learning and Supports?	6) Collect, analyse and reflect on data about the use of embedded learning opportunities and on child progress.
	7) Use data to decide whether to continue or change parts of embedded instruction (i.e., What, When, How).

Who is the Child?



Practice 1

Work in partnership with families and whānau to use strengths-based information to guide embedded learning support.

WHO IS THE CHILD?

Preferred People and Places	Child and Family Photo (insert here)	Identity, Language and Culture
Interests and Preferences	Strengths	
Regular Activities and Routines	Ways of Knowing and Expressing	

Who is the Child? - Profile

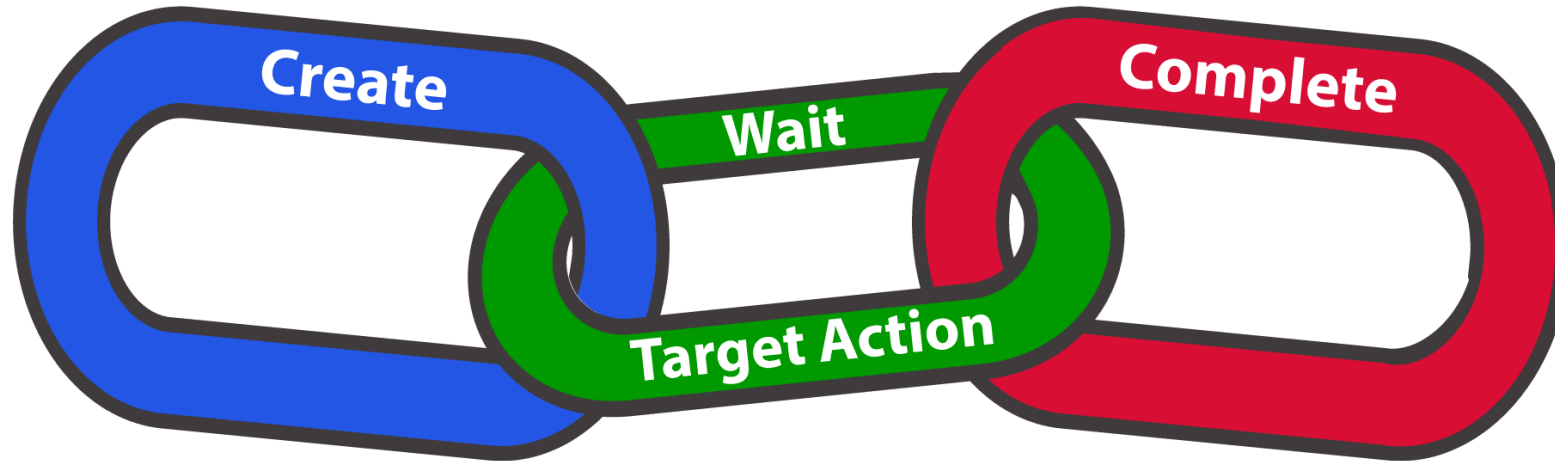


- Planning for ELS starts with learning about the child, family, culture and community.
- Whānau, kaiako and professional share what they already know and gathering information to inform next steps.

Complete Learning Opportunities

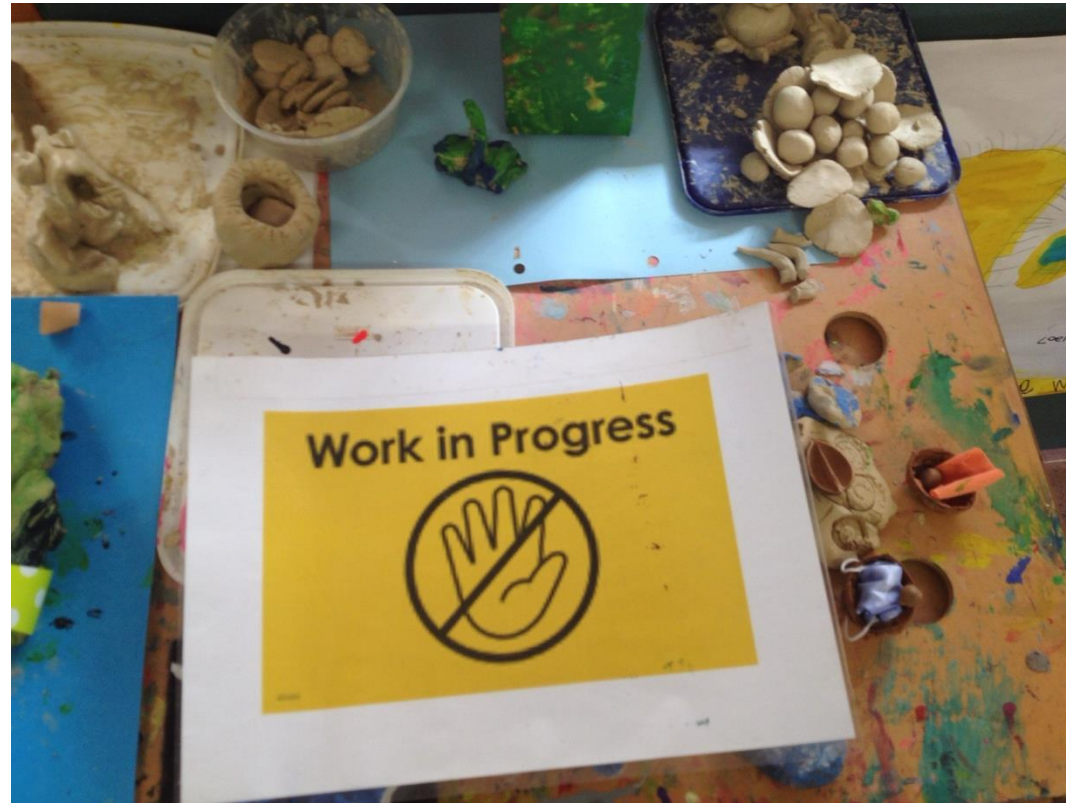


A natural back-and-forth interaction where a child can practice using the target action in a supportive and ongoing interaction with an adult.



Consistently engaging with children in interactions as complete learning opportunities will ensure they have multiple opportunities to be successful in their learning.

Iterative and ongoing





Implementation Supports: Including Coaching

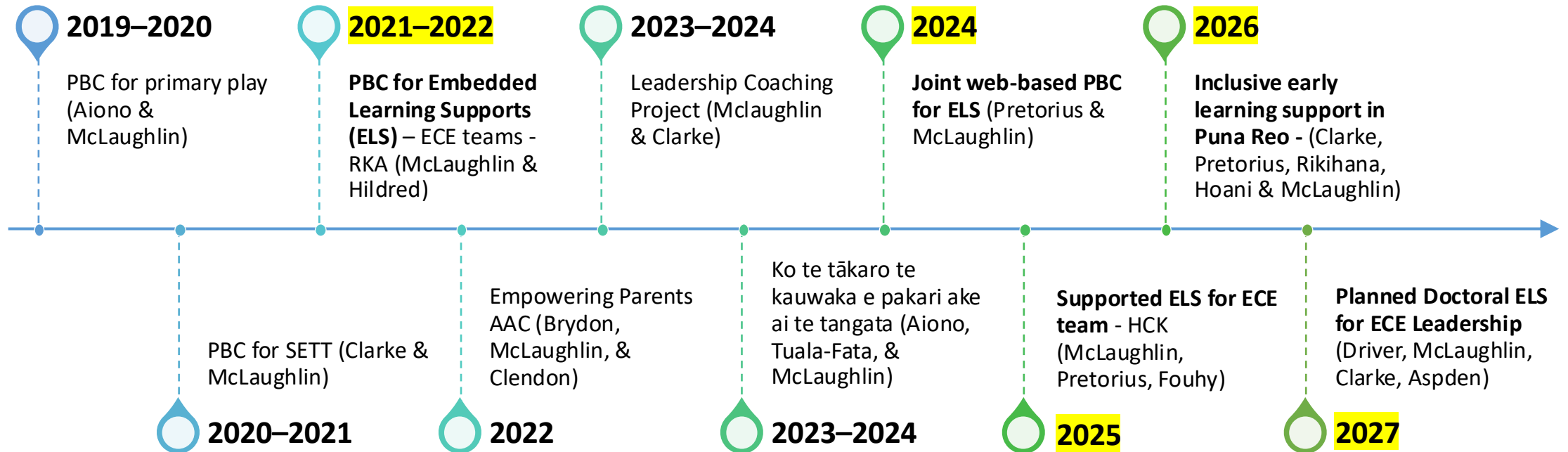


Coaching Kaleidoscope

McLaughlin, T. & Clarke, L. (2024). Leadership coaching programme overview and background. Unpublished guide.

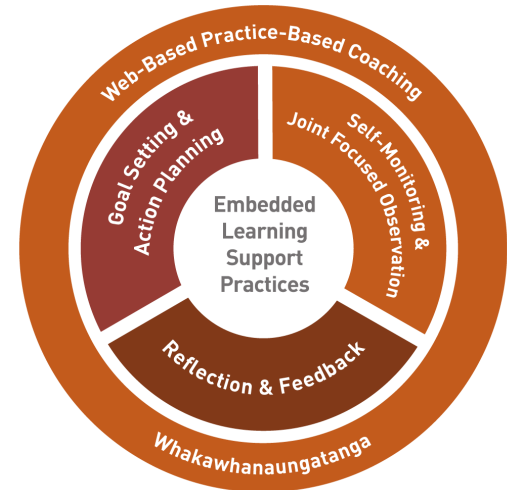
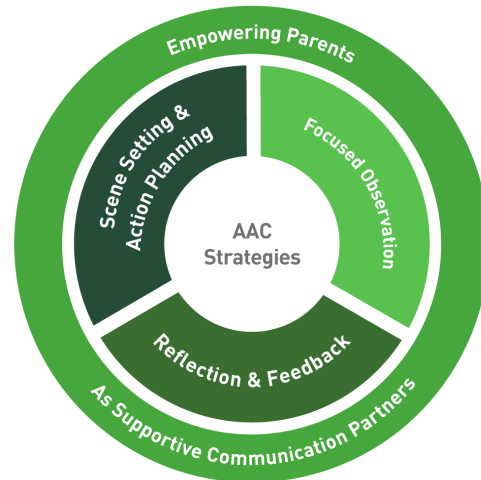
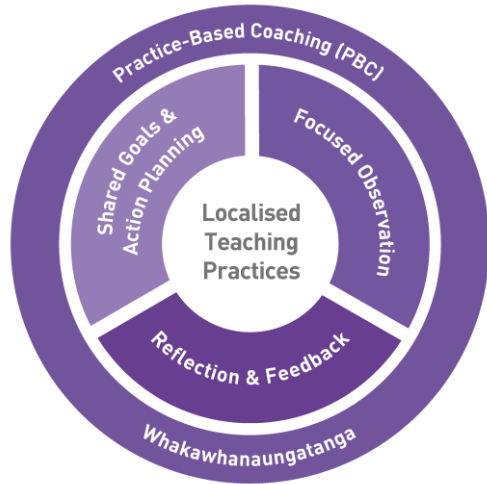
Snyder, P. A., Hemmeter, M. L., & Fox, L. (Eds.). (2022). Essentials of practice-based coaching: Supporting effective practices in early childhood. Brookes.

Current and Past PBC & ELS Aotearoa Projects





Current Iterations of PBC across projects in NZ





Teacher, leader and coach reflection themes

- Increased **acceptance of teaching** – intentional teaching
- Appreciation for **specific and actionable guidance**
- See value in the **flexible structure**, informed by local **values**
- **Excited by the learning** for children and themselves (as professionals)

Embedded Learning Support Travels...



**Embedded
Learning Support
for Early Learning**

Aotearoa



**Embedded
Learning Support
for Early Learning**

Australia

Australian ECEC Context



- **Current Population:** 27,800,000+
- **Urban:** About 86% of the population living in cities and coastal regions.
- **Languages Spoken:** Over 20% of Australians speak a language other than English at home, including Mandarin, Arabic, Vietnamese, Cantonese, and Punjabi.
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples** 812,000+ individuals, making up about 3.2% to 3.8% of the total population



Australian Policy Reforms



- **National Disability Insurance Scheme 2013 – 2026**
- National scheme based on individualised packages for persons with disabilities aged from birth to 65 years using a disability market model

NDIS review (2023) recommended a shift away from individualised packages to tiered supports:

- NDIS – retained as intensive individual
- Foundational Supports/ Thriving Kids - community level support for children with ‘low to moderate’ needs
- Universal services – better utilisation of services like Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and Schools

Inclusion in Australian ECEC

- Legal anti-discrimination legislation dating back to 1992
- Focus still on employment of an additional staff member or aide
- National Inclusion Support Program with broad focus including indigenous families, families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds, including refugees.



Early Childhood Australia
and Early Childhood
Intervention Australia

POSITION STATEMENT ON THE INCLUSION
OF CHILDREN WITH A DISABILITY IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE



BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING

National Early Years Learning Framework



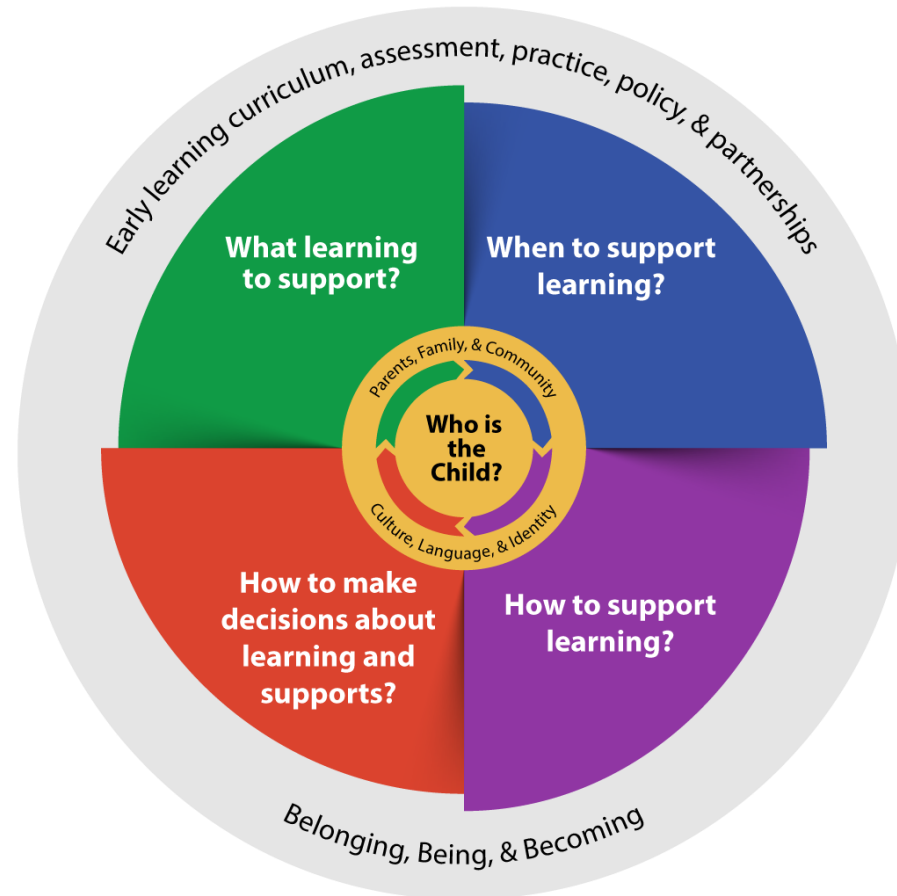
LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators

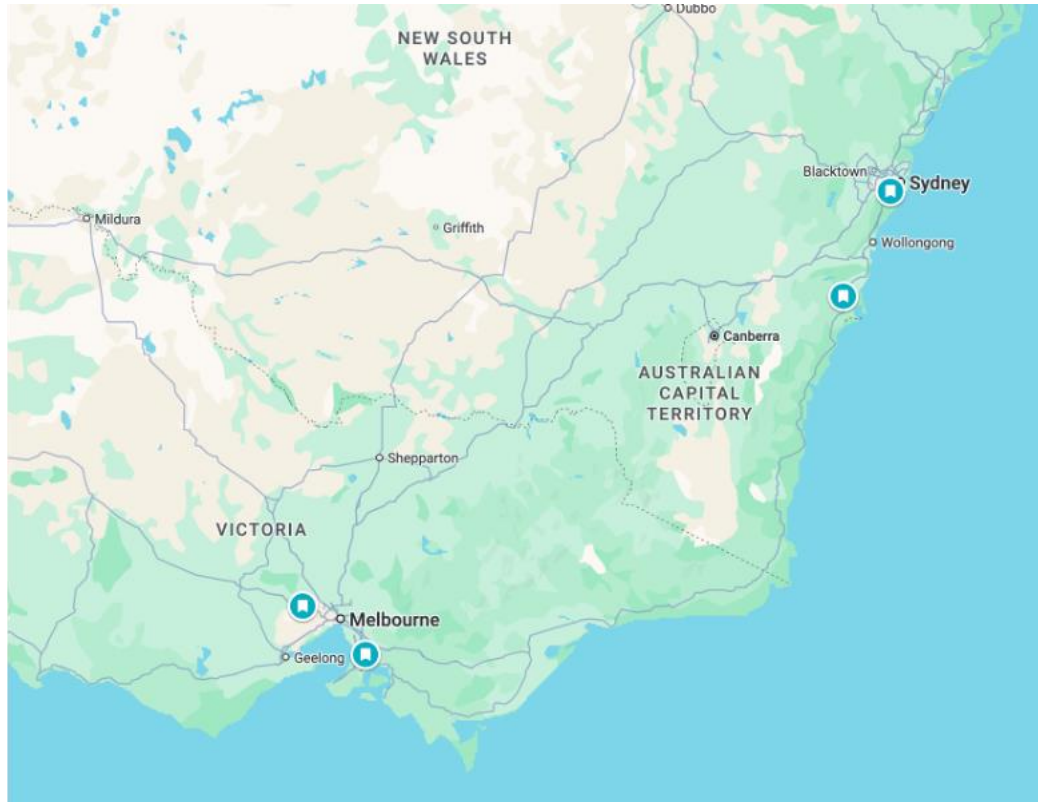
PRACTICES

- Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches
- Responsiveness to children
- Play-based learning and intentionality
- Learning environments responsiveness
- Continuity of learning and transitions
- Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing

Embedded Learning Support Australia



Australian Implementation



- January 2025:
 - Adaptation and review of materials for Australian context
- February 2025:
 - ELS Lead Coaches complete 5 days of training on ELS & PBC
- Implementation across 4 ECEC services
 - March/April
 - Initial site visits
 - April/May
 - ELS workshops for staff
 - May-December
 - Coaching sessions



Teacher Reflections from the Pilot

- Growing confidence and capability
 - Teachers shifted from uncertainty about meeting complex needs to feeling capable and effective in supporting children's learning.
- Embedded support is achievable
 - Teachers realised meaningful support can occur through small, intentional moments throughout everyday routines and interactions.
- Strengths-based practice influenced broader teaching
 - Beginning with children's strengths positively impacted both ELS planning and overall teaching practice.
- Clear, achievable goals supported intentional teaching
 - Breaking goals into short, targeted skills helped teachers plan purposeful learning opportunities.
- Coaching strengthened reflection and recognition of progress
 - Coaching provided valuable perspective, helping teachers recognise both child progress and growth in their own practice.
- Consistency across teams
 - Shared tools and prompts supported more aligned responses and clearer team practices.

What next?



Scaling and Research Direction

- Expanding implementation across 30–40 early childhood education & care services
- Examining impact on child outcomes and educator practice
- Investigating effectiveness across diverse contexts, including socioeconomic and culturally diverse communities, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations
- Partnering with government stakeholders to explore sustainability and system-level scale