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Research Snapshot No. 16

Child-led goal setting and evaluation tools for children with a disability: A scoping review

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In the spirit of reconciliation PRECI acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.



*Presented by Kerry Dominish,
Speech Pathologist*

What you need to know

Paper focus: on child-led goal setting tools for children with disabilities or developmental delays aiming “to enhance children's active participation in goal setting within developmental therapy or rehabilitation contexts.” The scoping review covered children up to 18 years of age.

Recognition that children with disabilities and developmental delays (and then as adults):

- + experience barriers to their participation in goal setting. (This can have long impacts on participation and autonomy, self-concept, problem-solving, and decision-making skills, and therefore their capacity for self-determination)
- + regularly and frequently are involved in formal goal setting experiences in multiple settings, more often than children without disability and delays, and
- + are continually having decisions made for them by many people (family, care givers, intervention and education providers) and they have little involvement or say.

What is this research about?

The research aims to answer the following questions:

- + What published evidence is there of the characteristics of child-led tools or approaches being used during goal setting and evaluation?
- + What are the clinimetric properties and clinical utility of tools used for goal setting and evaluation with a child self-respondent?

This paper recognises that:

- + person-centred care frameworks evidenced in adult research literature suggest children should be actively involved in goal setting and informs how children can be involved,
- + we should consider the unique needs of children particularly as their skills are evolving,
- + evidence-based clinical guidelines support goal setting practices that are collaborative, involve child and family and direct interventions towards meaningful areas for children and their families, and
- + child-led goal setting has the potential to positively influence the child-practitioner relationship and, because the goals have personal value for the child, to improve self-efficacy, engagement, and outcomes.

What did the researchers do?

The researchers conducted a scoping review guided by the JBI manual for evidence synthesis and reported according to the PRISMA extension for Scoping Reviews guidelines. Six electronic databases were searched and reviewed to identify relevant studies for the children aged less than 18 years.

Data extraction and synthesis were performed to classify tools and approaches and then later, to develop a framework for the child-led goal setting and evaluation tool / approach.

An abductive qualitative content analysis approach was applied to data synthesis, which included:

- + an inductive phase (to identify and classify tools and approaches reported in the published literature)
- + followed by a deductive phase (to categorize these data using existing goal setting theory and author clinical experience, to develop a framework that could be applied in clinical practice.)

What did the researchers find?

- + Fifty articles met the inclusion criteria – children as self-respondents during at least one phase of goal setting and evaluation.
- + Three approaches and four tools for child-led goal setting and evaluation were identified.
 - Child-led goal setting and evaluation approaches: ENGAGE approach, International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), “Personalised goals for positive behaviour support”.
 - Child-led goal setting and evaluation tools: Canadian Occupation Performance Measure (most frequent) Goal Attainment Scale, KID'EM, Perceived Efficacy and Goal Setting System(PEGS).
- + No studies reported the clinimetric properties of tools specifically for child self-responders.

What did the researchers find?

(cont.)

- + Qualitative analysis revealed six distinct goal phases used in tools and approaches. The six distinct goal phases were synthesized into a new framework for child-led goal setting and evaluation titled DECIDE:
 - Direct children to goal setting;
 - Elicit goal topics and priorities;
 - Construct a goal statement;
 - Indicate baseline goal performance;
 - Develop an action plan to address the goal; and
 - Evaluate goal progress after the intervention.
- + Goal setting and evaluation with children should be considered as a multi-phase process.



FIGURE 1 Summary of the six phases of the DECIDE framework for child-led goal setting and evaluation.

TABLE 1 Description of the child-led goal setting phases and components of the DECIDE framework.

Goal phase		Description
D	Direct children to goal setting	Actions taken to direct children's attention to and engagement in goal setting, that is, building rapport.
E	Elicit goal topics and priorities	Actions taken to support children to: (1) self-identify goal areas across the ICF as relevant and (2) prioritize the most important goal areas to be addressed through intervention from the children's perspective.
C	Construct a goal statement	Actions taken to support children to construct a statement that represents the topic and desired outcome for each of their chosen goals.
I	Indicate baseline goal performance	Actions taken to support children to self-evaluate each goal for (1) their current competence in that goal, (2) satisfaction with their competence, or (3) confidence or readiness to address the goal (goal self-efficacy).
D	Develop an action plan to address the goal	Actions taken to identify with children (1) an action plan to address the goal, (2) facilitators and barriers to achieving the goal, and (3) strategies and people to help to address barriers.
E	Evaluate goal progress after the intervention	Actions taken to support children to self-evaluate progress or goals after an intervention, including re-administration of outcome measures applied at the 'indicate' stage.

Abbreviation: ICF, International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health.

How can you use this research?

- + Research relevance – to any person in any role involved in early childhood intervention, rehabilitation, early childhood education, support in schools, National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), research, policy making, including parents and carers, in any setting where goals are being developed for children of all ages.

It can be used to:

- + guide clinicians and researchers in implementing child-led goal setting in early childhood intervention
- + build on what we know about how we should implement child lead / child voice practices
- + consider the implications of goal setting strategies across every phase of service delivery
- + evaluate the DECIDE framework as a tool to help structure the goal setting process and ensure that children are actively involved.

Where to from here?

Researchers and practitioners can consider:

- + how practitioners, teachers, policy makers and planners involve children when making overarching plans at the start of a service and for plan periods,
- + how practitioners and teachers involve children when planning and evaluating service or session goals and strategies,
- + the impact of building children's capacity to be able to have a say in setting their own goals on their health, wellbeing, safety, independence, autonomy, social engagement, behaviour, future learning and employment outcomes, and
- + addressing the unique needs of children of all ages as well as supporting their skills to develop their goal setting skills.

About the researchers

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THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!