



# The National Best Practice Framework for Early Childhood Intervention

**The Framework in Action: Theory to Practice**

**Professional Engagement Report**

January 2026

# Introduction

This paper reports on what was learned from professionals, researchers and advocates who participated in targeted online information consultations during November – December 2025. PRECI facilitated the discussion with the aims of a) learning how professionals were currently supporting implementation of the Framework, b) understanding what more PRECI could do to support ongoing implementation, and c) considering how we could work together in the future.

The sessions were held following the release of the National Best Practice Framework for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) (The Framework).

The Framework was developed as part of an independent review of early childhood intervention (ECI) best practice commissioned by the Department of Social Services (DSS). This is in fulfilment of Action 2.4 of the Early Childhood Targeted Action Plan, which is part of the implementation of Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021-2031:

*Review guidance for best practice in early childhood intervention, seek to review current guidance and prepare a framework for best practice in early childhood intervention that reflects current research and evidence*

The professional consultations were conducted by PRECI representatives, Denise Luscombe and Kerry Bull, both of whom were on the team that developed the Framework. Kerry and Denise had previously facilitated online and in-person consultations to support the development of the Framework. A report from those 2024 consultations is available [here](#).

## 1. Methodology

### How did we conduct the sessions?

Practitioners, researchers, policy makers, and representatives from advocacy organisations and peak bodies were invited by email to participate in a one-hour online consultation.

The majority of participants had been involved in either in-person, or on-line sessions, for the 2024 consultations that focussed on the development of the Framework.

The purpose of the 2025 sessions was to:

- Share background information about the Framework and associated resources
- Discuss ways to work together to support implementation
- Gain insights into implementation barriers and enablers

### What were the characteristics of the participants?

A total of 282 invitations were sent to individuals involved in the groups outlined below. Of those, 102 professionals participated in ten targeted sessions.

The participants joined the sessions from all States and Territories of Australia including Major Cities, Inner Regional Australia, Outer Regional Australia, Remote Australia and Very Remote Australia (ABS, 2023).

Each session focussed on a specific group of professionals (see Table 1).

Allied Health Professional Organisations (n= 12)	Australian Physiotherapy Association, Australian Psychological Society, Speech Pathology Australia, Occupational Therapists Australia, Allied Health Professionals Australia
Researchers (n=12)	Southern Cross University, AIFS, Kids Research Institute, Griffith University, Western Sydney University, Monash University, Women’s and Children’s Hospital SA, ARACY, Curtin Uni, Uni Sydney
ECEC, School and Inclusion (n=7)	Inclusion Support Agencies, KU, University of Tasmania, Charges Syndrome Org,
Health (n=7)	Health Department (Vic), Municipal Association of Victoria, ACAFNA, AHP Australia, Australasian Society of Developmental Paediatrics, Western Sydney Primary Health Network, Maternal, Child and Family Health Nurses Australia
Peak bodies (n=7)	ECIA (Vic/Tas), National Disability Services (NDS), Down Syndrome Aus, SDN Children’s Services, Toy Libraries Aus, Dieticians Association, Cerebral Palsy Alliance
NDIA (n=34)	Early Childhood Branch,
Family Advocacy (n=3)	Belongsid Families, Siblings Australia, Family Advocacy
Multicultural Organisations (n=4)	Ethnic Community Services, Autism Community Network, Great Southern Migrant Services, Playgroups NSW
Rural remote (n=9)	Representatives from Outer Regional Australia, Remote Australia and Very Remote Australia
Sole providers and private practitioners (n=9)	Representatives from individual service provider organisations

**Table 1:** Targeted session participants

### What did we ask?

The facilitators focused discussion on three questions.

- What are you planning to do to support implementation of the Framework?
- What else can PRECI do to support you with implementation?
- How can we work together?

### How did we record and analyse the data?

Following verbal permission from the participants, the sessions were recorded through Zoom. The two facilitators took written notes throughout the sessions.

Documentation was reviewed by both facilitators and was analysed to identify common or recurring insights.

In order to understand what more PRECI could do with supporting ongoing implementation of the Framework and how we can work collaboratively with others, the insights were arranged into themes identified as implementation drivers by Fixen and Blase (2008) (see Figure 1).

Fixen and Blasé (2008) outline three core implementation drivers: competency drivers, organisation drivers and leadership.

### 1) Competency Drivers

including selection, training and coaching. These are mechanisms to develop, improve and sustain educator and leaders' abilities to implement an evidence-based program or practice as intended to benefit children.

### 2) Organisation Drivers

including systems intervention, facilitative administration and decision-support data systems. These are mechanisms to create and sustain hospitable organisational and system environments for effective educational services.

### 3) Leadership.

These are mechanisms that focus on providing the right leadership strategies for different types of leadership challenges such as making decisions, providing guidance, and supporting organisational functioning.

## 2. Results

### What were the key insights?

Participants were universally positive about the Framework. Many had been to previous webinars when the Framework was released in September 2025 and had reviewed the key



Figure 1. Implementation Drivers (Fixen & Blasé, 2008)

documents and associated resources. Of those, some had commenced implementation within their organisation (e.g. NFP ECI agencies, Peak bodies).

Other participants had not yet had the opportunity to review the Framework and were grateful for the opportunity to hear an overview during the session.

Some praised the Framework as a “*legacy piece*” and were positive about the “*structure and utility in supporting the early intervention team*”. Some felt that it was a good time to “*energise the sector*” at a time when many are feeling tired, undervalued and dispirited. Others provided feedback on further information required in key documents, ‘tweaks’ to wording, changes to the design of some resources to increase usability for parents/carers, and suggestions for additional resources to support implementation.

Challenges to implementation were noted, including:

- Workforce pressures
- Unintended disincentive of NDIS rules (e.g. travel)
- Difficulty raising awareness with private practitioners and sole providers on the ground.

Key insights are presented under three themes, or ‘implementation drivers’.

#### a) **Competency Drivers**

##### **Selection (Priority groups for implementation support)**

Participants indicated that there are key groups that should form the focus of implementation supports, including:

- Rural and remote areas
- Private practitioners/sole providers
- Early career practitioners
- Undergraduates
- Leadership

##### **Training & Coaching**

Participants indicated that there are key areas of professional learning required, including:

- Supporting child and family needs (e.g. family quality of life).
- Understanding teamwork approaches and clarifying Key Worker role and scope of practice.
- Putting theory into practice by Integrating the Framework principles into daily work.
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities for ECI and ECEC professionals in working together.
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities for ECI and health professionals in working together.
- Delivering high quality telepractice and digital health models of service delivery
- Working with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse children and families, considering factors like socioeconomic background, education level, visa status, and cultural values when providing support.

- Understanding intersectionality (e.g. CALD and autistic).

Participants also suggested that:

- Fidelity of practice is an important step in implementation that should be supported through coaching (Note: PRECI has a license for the Torsch coaching platform).
- They would like to share information about the Framework but needed to understand the copyright requirements that restrict adaptation of materials or the development of materials for commercial purposes detailed on all the Framework documents.
- There is a need for 'whole of community' or location-based engagement and professional development to help build integrated services or the ecosystem for children and their families.

## **b) Organisation Drivers**

### **Systems Intervention**

Participants indicated that:

- Funding is required to support the translation of the Framework into practice
- Professional peak body and government endorsement is necessary
- Current networks should be harnessed to share information (e.g. Sole provider networks)
- Collaboration across sectors should be supported (e.g. health, education, disability, social care)
- Updating public policy and associated pricing guide to reflect the Framework is necessary (e.g. travel that supports working in natural environments)
- Organisations are referencing the Framework in current submissions (e.g. Thriving Kids, Mental Health Capability Framework)

### **Facilitative Administration**

Participants indicated that:

- PRECI has a role in mobilising implementation teams at a community level (e.g. facilitating community-based sessions)
- Leveraging government communications channels to signal support for the framework would be advantageous

### **Decision Support Data System**

Participants indicated that:

- The effectiveness of the Framework should be evaluated
- A system for identifying, collecting, and analysing data is needed (e.g. child and family outcomes, standards of practice...)

## **c) Leadership**

Participants indicated that:

- Leaders are key enablers or drivers of the Framework's implementation
- Leadership 'buy-in' is critical to successful implementation

- Leaders should be encouraged to attend professional development with practitioners
- Leaders should be provided with focused implementation support (e.g. Community of practice, forums...)

### What are our recommendations?

For PRECI to:

- Keep the sector engaged through implementation strategies and success stories
- Develop a priority list of future resource development and implementation support aligned with PRECI working group plans (2026-2027)
- Engage with peak bodies and universities regarding the framework and its implementation
- Explore ways to raise awareness and embed principles and practices (e.g. CoP, podcasts, peak body webinars...), particularly for the key groups identified for implementation support
- Ensure participants who indicated their interest in being part of future resource development working groups are invited (e.g. schools, telepractice)
- Arrange follow-up meetings with those who indicated interest in working together to share information and support implementation (e.g. Peak body webinars)
- Consider diverse representation in the development of future resources (e.g. parents/carers, multicultural organisations, disability peak bodies...)
- Establish a clear feedback loop on changes to current resources that have been suggested by professionals and researchers
- Seek funding for the development of ECI personnel standards of practice.
- Continue to advocate for implementation funding through the Consortium
- Continue to seek funding through philanthropic trusts
- Develop and market PRECI's approaches for funded professional development and consultancy
- Continue developing identified resources (e.g. tipsheet for schools, reflection checklists...)