

The National Best Practice Framework for Early Childhood Intervention

Framework Implementation: From Principles to Practice Road Trip Interim Report (June 2026)

Introduction

This interim paper reports on progress with the Framework implementation workshops completed in Brisbane, Sydney, Hobart and Launceston in 2026. A final report will be available when workshops are completed in all other states and territories.

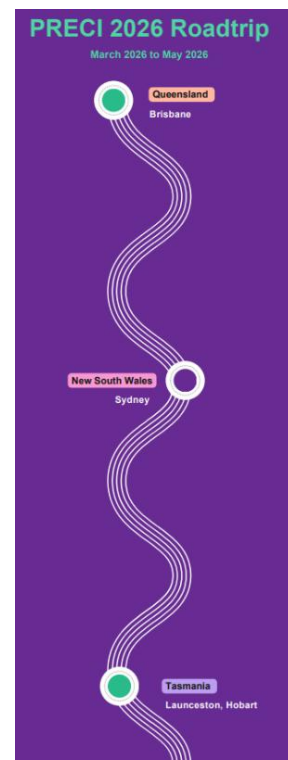
The workshops were conducted after the National Best Practice Framework for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) (The Framework) was released in September 2025.

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 workshops were conducted by PRECI representatives, Denise Luscombe and Kerry Bull, both of whom were on the team that developed the Framework. Kerry and Denise previously facilitated:

- Online and in-person consultations in 2024/2025 to support the development of the Framework. See reports [November 2024](#), [December 2024](#), [January 2025](#)
- Targeted online stakeholder engagement consultations in 2025 with practitioners, researchers, referrers such as GPs and developmental paediatricians, policy makers, and representatives from advocacy organisations and peak bodies to:
 - a) share information about the Framework and associated resources,
 - b) discuss ways to work together to support implementation, and
 - c) gain insights into implementation barriers and enablers. See report [here](#).



Background

How did we conduct the workshops?

Professionals with an interest in the Framework were invited via the PRECI newsletter, email list and social media channels to participate in free workshops held in Brisbane, Sydney, Hobart and Launceston. Participants could choose to attend one or both of the workshops.

- Workshop 1. Framework implementation. From principles to practice
- Workshop 2. Development of professional standards for ECI practitioners

Whilst the aims of the workshops remained the same across locations, an iterative process was utilised to build on feedback to develop resources such as self-reflection checklists and professional competencies.

What were the aims of the workshops?

- Workshop 1.

For participants to:

- ✓ Deepen knowledge of the National Best Practice Framework for ECI principles, practices and resources
- ✓ Consider how the decision-making guide strengthens practice
- ✓ Understand the enablers/barriers (drivers) to implementation reported in previous consultations.
- ✓ Understand how the Framework practices can be implemented within daily work
- ✓ Complete an online template designed to evaluate and monitor practices related to the Framework principles (individual/team/organisational levels)
- ✓ Share successful strategies to improve practices
- ✓ Develop a plan for continuous improvement
- ✓ Discuss how PRECI can support targeted individual, team and community-wide implementation in the future

- Workshop 2.

For participants to:

- ✓ Share related professional standards and research
- ✓ Commence discussions on the development of ECI professional standards
- ✓ Hear from the sector about desired competencies

Who participated in the workshops?

Sixty-five participants have been involved so far. They include those who have worked in the field for less than 5 years to 20 years+, representing themselves individually, their organisation, discipline or policy area.

Participants indicated they worked in the following role/s: Manager, parent/carer, occupational therapist, behaviour analyst, speech pathologist, specialist teacher, music therapist, registered nurse, dietitian, physiotherapist, psychologist, developmental specialist, academic, researcher, educator, paediatrician, CEO, education support officer, early years strategist, policymaker, counsellor, play therapist, support coordinator, ECEC educator, ECEC coordinator, playgroup project officer, family centre director, and inclusion professional.

Findings

Workshop one: Framework implementation. From principles to practice

In workshop one, three key findings were identified related to the:

- a. Decision Making Guide
- b. Self-reflection checklists
- c. Future implementation supports

Key findings related to these three themes are described below.

a. Decision Making Guide

Following discussion about the Framework outcomes and principles, the Decision Making Guide (DMG) was introduced to participants, the majority of whom had not explored it previously. In particular, very few participants had familiarised themselves with the associated appendices on 'How often, how much and for how long' and 'Teamwork'. These two documents were discussed and the following were highlighted.

- Appendix A. [How much, How often, How long](#)

Key issues identified included that:

- guidance about the decision making required for the issue of the frequency, intensity and duration of ECI supports was valued
- the move away from using the medical term of 'dosage' was appreciated
- an accompanying graphic and family-friendly version of the guide to use with parents/carers would be helpful
- the decision-making questions need to consider therapeutic guidelines for specific diagnoses where appropriate
- the focus on child and family goals as the first consideration was valued
- the inclusion of child and family wellbeing was noted as critical
- the challenges associated with intervention 'dosage' being determined by others such as the NDIA, who do not know the child and family well

- Appendix B. [Teamwork](#)

Due to the number of queries received regarding the Collaborative Teamwork Principle, the workshop focussed on teamwork approaches and the practice of a Key Worker. There is clearly inconsistent use of the term and practices within the field, and therefore the roles and responsibilities of Key Workers (also evidenced in the Thriving Kids Advisory Group report). As a result, the discussion focussed on the issue of a job title versus the role of a Key Worker.

Questions that were discussed to support understanding of the role of a Key Worker included:

- ✓ Do you have a team supporting you in your work with the child/family?
- ✓ Is the team made up of different disciplines or the same discipline as yourself?
- ✓ Do you just coordinate services or provide information?
- ✓ Do you work with the child/family (& others) as the conduit of the team, all having a shared responsibility to support the goals and outcomes of the child/family, whether from one or several organisations/practices?
- ✓ Do you have a process for calling in or meeting with members of the child's team as coaching or discussion is required (with permission)?
- ✓ Does the family know the names of their team members, their roles and responsibilities, and do they see them on a regular basis?
- ✓ How do you support other Key Workers from different professions who are working with children and families for whom you are a team member for?

b. Self-reflection checklists

In response to feedback from participants in previous consultations, PRECI is currently developing self-reflection checklists related to the 14 principles of the Framework.

The checklists have been designed to increase awareness of professional practice and support ongoing learning and development by reflecting on beliefs, attitudes, skills and knowledge, and how these influence practitioners' work. The tools have not been designed for performance management or assessment. In the checklists, respondents are asked to rate their perception of practice as *'This is my strength'*, or *'I'm getting there'*, or *'Not yet'*.

In the workshops, participants were invited to complete several draft checklists on their mobile phones using a QR code. They were asked to reflect on their individual, team, or organisational practices. They were also asked to provide feedback on the checklist itself.

The anonymous data was collected and collated in-situ by the facilitators to provide immediate feedback to participants. The data was used to prompt discussion, identify strengths and areas that might benefit from implementation support. For example, 65 participants completed the child-centred checklist. Overall, 60% of participants identified child-centred practices as a strength, and 40% as either 'getting there', or 'not there yet' (see Figure 1).

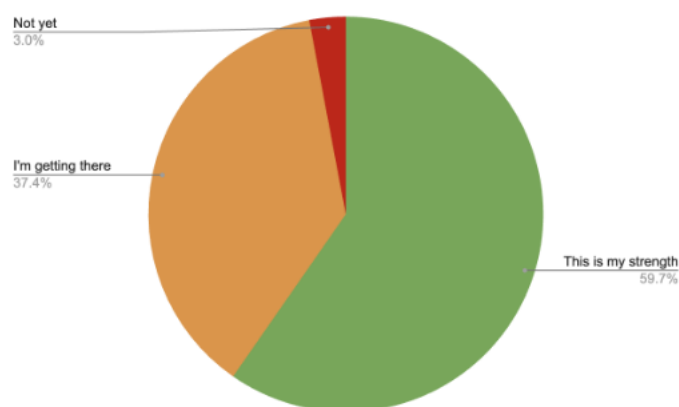


Figure 1. Total responses: Child-centred self-reflection tool (n=65)

Data from each of the 13 items on the child-centred checklist highlighted two areas that could benefit from implementation support. This was consistent across each of the four locations and included the following:

- When asked to reflect on whether *'I/we observe, listen and involve children in making decisions about things that matter to them'*, 41% of participants identified this as a strength, and 59% as either 'getting there', or 'not there yet' (see Figure 2).
- When asked to reflect on whether *'I/we understand, identify and respond to the differential impact of trauma'*, 43% of participants identified this as a strength, and 57% as either 'getting there', or 'not there yet' (see Figure 3).

3. I/we observe, listen and involve children in making decisions about things that matter to them

65 responses

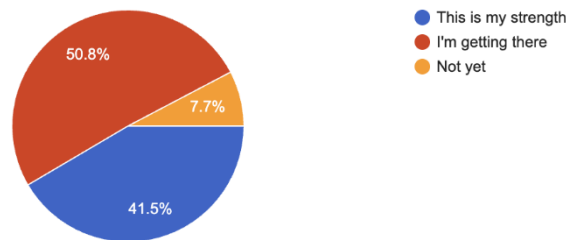


Figure 2. Responses from the child-centred checklist (child voice and agency)

14. I/we understand, identify, and respond to the differential impact of trauma

65 responses

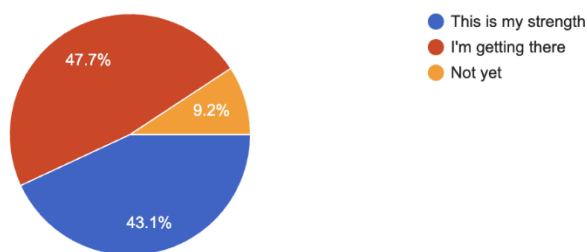


Figure 3. Responses from the child-centred checklist (trauma-informed)

c. Future implementation supports

Throughout the consultations and workshops, participants were asked to provide specific information about how PRECI can support the implementation and embedding of the Framework and its principles in their everyday work, as well as support community-wide awareness and understanding. The consultation responses overwhelmingly point to three sector priorities. Examples are provided for clarity but are not limited to those included below.

- Build workforce capability

The strongest theme was the need for training, mentoring, and supervision, with online, face-to-face, and on-the-job support highlighted. This is consistent with knowledge in implementation science, and best practice in adult learning that leads to practice change. Included in this area was also the need for input into undergraduate university and TAFE courses, and microcredentialling.

- Embed best practice consistently across all services

Participants requested consistent, visible and 'required' best practice. This included areas such as further development of implementation tools and resources, coaching of providers, communities of practice, modelling of best practice (whether online or on-site), and supporting ECEC providers to implement inclusive practice. A national ECI certification (or similar) was requested plus the need to work with policy makers to align funding with best practice.

- Drive lasting cultural and cross-sector change

Participants stressed that lasting change requires shared language, shared expectations and shared responsibility across health, education, disability and community sectors. Examples included working to embed the Framework in all relevant systems, communities of practice and sector-wide learning networks, national and state-based leadership communities of practice, public and family-facing education to support awareness and understanding of high-quality services and supports, to name a few.

PRECI has already commenced exploration of activities to support key gap areas such as leadership support.

Workshop two: Development of professional standards for ECI practitioners

In workshop two, participants were provided with background information about related national and international professional standards and research prior to working together to propose ECI professional standards and competencies.

Participants were unified in their recommendation that the standards reflect the Framework principles and align with any discipline-specific standards.

Using an iterative process, participants commenced work on proposing competencies for some of the universal and key Principles. This work will continue in future workshops so that draft competencies have been developed for all of the Framework's principles.

This will be used in a larger project that includes a scoping review, working group, and expert advisory group.

Conclusion

Workshops have provided PRECI with a valuable opportunity to support the implementation of the Framework and learn more about implementation enablers/barriers that will inform future professional learning, resource development and other individual, team and community-wide support. Further to this, participants provided critical input into the development of ECI professional standards and impetus for PRECI to continue this work.

We look forward to the scheduled workshops in the remaining states and territories in the second half of the year. A final report will be available in December 2026.

Denise Luscombe & Kerry Bull (June 2026)