

**Presentation Title:**

**National Guidelines for Best Practice: Exploring ECI Practitioner gaps in knowledge and barriers/enablers to implementation when working with children with developmental delays and disabilities and their families.**

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**Objectives**

The introduction of the NDIS and increased funding opportunities has seen the demand for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) support rise significantly with an associated influx of new graduates or practitioners new to ECI. Their opportunities for appropriate supervision and guidance from more experienced practitioners can often be limited with many clinicians inadequately prepared to tackle their incumbent roles and responsibilities. Where gaps in the knowledge of clinicians exist, services are likely to be less effective and less evidence based, resulting in poorer outcomes for the child and their family.

This project conducted by two final year Occupational Therapy students from Monash University, aimed to explore the gaps in knowledge amongst ECI practitioners and possible barriers or enablers to implementing the National Best Practice Guidelines at the individual, organisational or government level. Identifying and quantifying gaps is important as it enables targeted action for building the collective capacity of ECI practitioners in delivering services to children and families that are grounded in best practice principles.

**Methods**

The two students collaborated with PRECI, their project sponsor and ORS, the allied health ECI service. Initial and focused information gathering included scoping the grey literature, peer-reviewed literature as well as consultations with staff at PRECI and the allied health staff at ORS Group including observations of ECI practices at ORS. A survey has been created, undergoing member checking by PRECI and ORS staff.

**Results**

This survey will be disseminated in March 2024 with analysed results to be presented via poster.

**References**

Early Childhood Intervention Australia Victoria/Tasmania [ECIA]. (2016, April). National guidelines:

Best practice in early childhood intervention.  
<https://www.eciavic.org.au/documents/item/1419>