Early Childhood Intervention Service: Tasmania

Eligibility for Service: Guidelines and Definitions

Early Childhood Intervention Service (ECIS) is a statewide service working in partnership with families of very young children 0-4 years.

ECIS maximises
- the developmental achievements of young children with developmental delays and disabilities;
- meets the needs of their families for knowledge, skills and support in raising their child;
- and enhances the capacity of the community to implement positive and effective systems to include young children with disabilities.

Eligibility:
Children are eligible for ECIS service if they have:
- a medically diagnosed condition that has a high probability of contributing to a developmental delay
- a diagnosed disability
- delays in at least two developmental areas: cognition, communication, physical, social, emotional or adaptive development
- significant atypical development
- whose support needs are additional to those available through universal services.

Eligibility is determined in consultation with the family and other relevant practitioners which may include a paediatrician, general practitioner, child health nurse, psychologist, therapist or early childhood teacher.

If existing information or medical records are adequate to determine eligibility, no additional assessment may be necessary. Further, eligibility may be determined by ECIS using informed opinion and judgement when standardised assessment is not appropriate or not available. This will be substantiated with direct observation data and rationale to support the need for ECIS.

Medical Diagnosis: Eligibility must include a doctor’s statement, hospital discharge summary or other medical record that verifies the medical diagnosis that is made. This eligibility remains as long as the diagnosis is present and there is a continuing need for the service.

Diagnosed Disability: Children are eligible if they have a identified disability including one of the following: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome or other chromosome abnormality, Hearing Impairment, Vision Impairment.
**Developmental Delay:** Children are eligible who demonstrate delay in at least two developmental areas, and the record file must contain the test protocol used to establish developmental delay.

- For infants born prematurely, developmental age must be measured against adjusted age rather than chronological age until the child is 24 months.
- For infants whose age is two months or less at assessment, atypical responses or behaviours must be documented.
- For children aged 2 months to 12 months, a delay of two months or more in at least two developmental areas must be documented.
- For children aged 13 months to 24 months a delay of three months or more in at least two developmental areas must be documented.
- For children aged 25 months to 36 months a delay of four months or more in at least two developmental areas must be documented.
- For children aged 37 months to 54 months a delay of six months or more in at least two developmental areas must be documented.

**Atypical Development:**
This includes children whose differences in development are to a marked degree, with significant deviations in the typical sequence of development.

**Not Meeting Eligibility:**
Not all children referred to ECIS will meet eligibility criteria. Children with a single area of concern such as speech or language development only, or behavioural concerns only where other developmental areas are within normal limits, will not receive a service from ECIS. Families referred who are not eligible will be referred to other appropriate services within their community.

ECIS aims to connect children and families to local services and support networks to strengthen a family’s capacity to access universal services and build networks of support. This ensures that services are delivered to those children and families with the greatest need.