

# CaFSA

Child and Family  
Supports Alliance NSW



**Principles for Developing a NSW Foundational  
Supports System for Children with Developmental  
Differences, Delays, or Disabilities and their Families**



# Introduction to CaFSA

The **Child and Family Supports Alliance NSW (CaFSA)**, is a collaborative body of leaders from NSW's mainstream and specialist community-based and not-for-profit sectors, including national parenting support services. CaFSA was established to advocate for, design, and implement foundational supports systems tailored for children with developmental differences and their families.

On May 23, 2024, seventeen leaders met at a roundtable to discuss and shape the framework for Foundational Supports NSW and nationally, informed by recommendations from the NDIS Review. Attendees represented various community-based not-for-profit stakeholders including early childhood education and care providers, early childhood intervention organisations, peer-led groups, researchers, and mainstream child and family service providers. Collectively, our trusted and established organisations work with over 182,000 children and families, including children with disabilities, and many of us have a broader reach through consultancy and support work. Collectively our organisations have operated for an average of 40 years.

## Purpose of the Roundtable

The roundtable aimed to identify principles and priority areas essential for developing an effective Foundational Supports system that acknowledges the existing system of trusted community-based organisations, including peer-led and national parenting support services.

This gathering marked the initial phase of a broader engagement strategy that will utilise the expertise of various community-based not-for-profit organisations who are experienced and trusted in their local and online communities.

The Foundational Supports system and ecosystem for children with developmental differences in NSW must be robust, inclusive, and adaptable. It must be based on the Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention Guidelines (2016).

**CaFSA is working to collaborate in developing a supportive framework for Foundational Supports that benefits children and their families across NSW.**



**The Alliance is hosting the National Child and Family Foundational Supports Co-Design Forum in Canberra in August 2024.**

# Key Principles for Foundational Supports Design

CaFSA recommends a system-wide approach to Foundational Supports for young children and their families that incorporates the following key principles:

## **1. Utilisation of Existing NSW and National Services:**

Recognise and leverage the deep experience and collaboration within the current service system to prevent duplication and fragmentation.

## **2. Seamless Integration:** Ensure that Foundational Supports are seamlessly integrated into early childhood services, avoiding silos of support.

## **3. Timely Early Intervention and Early Childhood Intervention:**

Prioritise early intervention and early childhood intervention strategies and services, particularly focusing on the critical first 2,000 days of a child's life, to enhance developmental outcomes and build the capacity of families to support their children.

## **4. Ease of Navigation and Accessibility:**

Implement a community-based navigator role that is codesigned with CaFSA and other stakeholders to meet the unique needs of children and their families. This role will facilitate entry points and connections in trusted place-based community-based settings, simplifying the navigation process for families, particularly those deterred by the complexity of the existing NDIS systems that have been designed for adults.

## **5. Peer and Parent-Led Initiatives:**

Increase support for peer work and parent-led organisations, recognising the value of lived experience and direct family involvement in service design and delivery.

## **6. Equitable Service Model:**

Prioritise a state-based, block-funded not-for-profit service model that promotes collaborative place-based approaches, ensuring equitable access and integrating services across educational, health, and social sectors.

## Opportunities and Recommendations

The roundtable highlighted several opportunities including the need for coordination of multiple views in the child and family sector and defining roles such as "Lead Practitioner". To address these, CaFSA recommends:

### **• Broad Stakeholder Engagement and Co-design:**

Continuously engage with the broad range of stakeholders including CaFSA, in the co-design process to ensure that services meet the diverse needs of children and families.

### **• Flexible and Inclusive Services:**

Design services that are family-friendly, not time-limited, have broad eligibility criteria, and are easy to access, ensuring they accommodate the unique needs of diverse groups including First Nations people, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, socio-economically disadvantaged, rural and remote communities, and other groups e.g. LGBTQI+.

### **• Resource Allocation:**

Secure adequate funding and resources to support specialised support needs and ensure that service providers are well-equipped and trained.

# Child and Family Supports Alliance NSW



## IN COLLABORATION WITH THE Early Childhood Intervention Best Practice Network

