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Arts & Social Sciences

Social Policy Research Centre

# Research intervention studies in NSW childhood intervention spaces

## Project plan

Prepared for:

Early Childhood Intervention Australia NSW/ACT

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# 1 Research background and scope

## 1.1 Rationale



ECI service provision; those who have had experience of ECI services pre-NDIS, those who have only had NDIS ECI services, and those who have no NDIS experiences yet. Service providers also come from different backgrounds; those directly providing ECI services, and those who work closely with ECI, but come from education, health, allied health and other mainstream services. Each will have a different experience of the transition that needs to be understood and any issues for them addressed.

Therefore, ECIA NSW/ACT has commissioned the Social Policy Research Centre to conduct research into the experiences of families and ECI service providers in the transition to the NDIS in NSW. The research will identify issues in the transition to the Scheme and assist in addressing these issues for the full NDIS roll out. The purposes of the research will be to:

1. Add to the evidence base about the transition to the NDIS in the ECI sector
2. Understand the experience and implications in NSW of the transition to the

shown in Table 1, the research focuses and information to be analysed map to both the research purposes and research questions, providing a framework for understanding how the research will achieve its purpose.

In examining these research questions through this framework, the research will consider the market context of the NDIS, recognise the different waves of children, families and service providers entering the NDIS, and the different levels of experience they may have of the NDIS and disability support.

**Table 1: Research framework**

Research purposes	Research questions	Research focus	Information to be analysed, if available
<p>1. Add to the evidence base about the transition to the NDIS in the ECI sector</p> <p>2. Understand the experience and implications of the national ECEI approach</p>	<p>RQ 1: What are families', ECI service providers' and mainstream providers' experiences of the current transition to the NDIS in NSW?</p>	<p>Understand family and provider experiences of the transitional ECEI arrangements.</p> <p>Understand opportunities and challenges in the implementation of the NDIS for providers and families.</p> <p>Provide insights into families' service choices and experiences of mainstream access and ECI services,</p>	<p>Family and provider expectations and experiences of the transitional ECEI arrangements.</p> <p>The support choices families make and the extent to which families utilise ECI services, including under individualised funding packages.</p> <p>Support for children and families at risk.</p> <p>Changes to practitioner roles (e.g. educators).</p>



## **2 Methodology**

### **2.1 Research approach**

The research will be a two time-point study with surveys, interviews and longitudinal case studies. The project will operate in three phases. The first phase will be planning and project set up and the following two phases will involve data collection and analysis. The phases are outlined in detail below.

#### **2.1.1 Phase 1: Planning and project set up**

The project will commence with a planning phase. This will include a planning meeting with ECIA NSW/ACT to confirm the research focus, questions and methodology. It will also include setting up and consulting with a Reference Group and updating an existing literature review to inform the project context. These planning activities will feed into finalisation of the project plan, design of the research instruments, and application for and receipt of ethics approval.

##### **Reference Group**

A Reference Group will guide the project. Membership of the Group will be determined in consultation with ECIA and may include ECIA staff and Board members, ECI service providers and sector experts. The Reference Group will meet up to six times during the project, either face-to-face or by phone. The first meeting will be early in the planning phase in order to consult with the sector, enable a partnership approach to the research, and allow the Group to inform the research focus and design.

##### **Literature update**

The research team completed a recent literature review of service transition and integration in ECI, incorporating both ECI service providers' and families' perspectives (see Appendix C in Meltzer et al., 2016). This review will be updated during the planning phase and throughout the project, with any new literature added to inform the current project.

#### **2.1.2 Phase 2: Data collecting 1 and preliminary analysis**

Data will be collected twice throughout the project, mainly from different participants at the first and second time-points; however some participants from the first time-point will contribute data again at the second time-point to



received  
Supports received and support  
choices  
Support for at-risk families  
Perspectives on quality  
supports  
Inclusion in mainstream  
services and use of specialist  
disability services  
Support at key transitions  
Outcomes being achieved

Experience of supporting at-  
risk families  
Working under a fee for  
service model  
Changes to roles  
Workforce changes  
Delivering innovation,  
efficiency and service  
sustainability

Service access for children  
not funded by NDIS  
Market regulation  
Workforce changes

designed to collect aggregate rather than individual level data. It will include sorting questions to reflect diversity in families' experience of the NDIS and in the types of service providers participating.

The survey will be distributed primarily online via ECIA and a range of ECI organisations in NSW, concurrently to the interviews taking place. Paper copies will be offered to interview participants at the conclusion of their interview in order to most easily facilitate their inclusion in the survey sample.

### **Secondary data**

Secondary data will be analysed, if available. This may include data from the NDIA, Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC), the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), as well as from customer relationship management (CRM) systems, such as



## 3 Implementation

### 3.1 Key personnel

The key personnel for the project will be:

**Professor Karen Fisher** (SPRC) will lead the project as Chief Investigator. Her research expertise is in the organisation of social services in Australia and China, including disability and mental health services and community care; inclusive research and evaluation methodology; and social policy process.

**Dr Ariella Meltzer** (SPRC) will be project manager and will collect and analyse data for the project. Ariella is an experienced social researcher and works on a range of evaluations and research projects about the experiences of, and service provision to, people with disability, children, young people and families. She is experienced in Plain English fieldwork with families.

**Dr Christiane Purcal** (SPRC) will collect and analyse data for the project. Christiane is an experienced researcher and project manager on evaluations that focus on disability and mental health policies, child and family services and community care policies.

**Professor Ilan Katz** (SPRC) will act as an advisor to the project. Ilan has expertise in early childhood intervention and many years of policy, practice and research experience in children and family services in the UK and Australia. He started his career as a social worker and manager, working in several local authorities and non-government organisations (NGOs) in London. He was head of Evaluation, Practice Development and Research at the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. After spending some time as a civil servant he returned to research to become Deputy Director of the Policy Research Bureau. He was Chief Investigator of the National Evaluation of the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy and Brighter Futures, NSW Department of Community Services Early Intervention Program.

Key ECIA NSW/ACT contacts for the research will be **Maf[ ]Y'CBUfdYm** (CEO, ECIA) and **Lorraine Heywood** (Manager Sector Development, NDIS

## 3.2 Communication

SPRC relies on a close working relationship with our clients, involving clear project management and communication processes. Proj





Project phase	Tasks	Responsibilities	Deliverables	Time
Round 2 of data collection and final analysis and reporting	Re-contact participants and new recruitment	SPRC – arrange and attend fortnightly teleconferences, meet with Reference Group, recruit, collect data.	Report 3 by December 31, 2017	September-December, 2017
	Interviews	ECIA – attend fortnightly teleconferences, meet with Reference Group, assist with recruitment, assist with access to Echidna and/or Supportability data.		
	Surveys			
	Secondary data analysis			
Final data analysis and reporting	SPRC – arrange and attend fortnightly teleconferences, analyse and report on data.  ECIA – attend fortnightly teleconferences, provide comments on draft report.	April 30, 2018	January-April, 2018	

### 3.6 Risk management

Risk will be monitored throughout the project. Anticipated risks and mitigating actions are noted below.

**Table 6:**

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Remedial Action
Recruitment difficulties/ insufficient sample	High	High	

Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Remedial Action
			of the same study, not repeat research.
Difficulty re-engaging participants in Round 2 / risk of attrition	Low	High	Difficulty re-engaging participants is a risk in any longitudinal study. The longitudinal case study design means that only a small number of repeat participants are needed in this research. This will minimise the impact of attrition.
Research encounters delays	High	High	Delays are a risk in all longitudinal projects, as a delay in one part of the project will have flow on effects for the rest of the timeline. The time allocation has been planned to accommodate this risk. Some project activities can also