

## Choice and Control Policy

### Policy Statement

Early Start Australia (ESA) is committed to promoting and protecting individual’s rights including freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making.

Early Start Australia’s Choice and Control Policy and Process is designed to meet National Standards for Disability Services, in particular Standard 1: Rights. The policy guides staff to support children and families to exercise their rights and have choice and control over their services.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to guide the delivery of services and ensure that ESA:

- All staff understand and provide choice and control to clients
- Clients are provided with accurate information in a format that is accessible to them in order to make informed decisions regarding their services and goals

### Scope

This policy applies to all Early Start Australia employees, volunteers and contracted staff (permanent, temporary and casual) employed in Early Start Australia’s divisions and business units and relates to the management of choice and control.

### Principles

Early Start Australia:

- Respects the rights of people with disabilities in exercising choice and control about matters that affect them
- Is committed to collaborating and consulting with people with disability (and other key stakeholders where appropriate) to promote and ensure active choice and control in relation to its services
- Affirms that all people with disability are assumed to have capacity to make decisions, exercise choice, and provide informed consent regardless of their disability
- Supports is clients to develop their capacity to make independent decisions
- Provides timely information in appropriate formats to support informed decision-making including people’s rights and responsibilities
- Promotes choice making about every stage of the therapy process, from goal setting to decisions about activities and games
- Supports people with disability in a way that is appropriate to their circumstances and cultural needs so as to maximise people’s opportunities to make choices and have control over decisions that affect their lives
- Recognises the role of family, carers and advocates in representing people’s interests and promoting choice and control in the planning and delivery of supports

### Definitions

**Dignity of risk-** autonomy and self-determination used by a person when making decisions, including the choice to take some risks in life.

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**Informed Consent-** voluntary agreement and willing acceptance of a proposition and following action where the person making the decision has appropriate information and capacity to make the decision free of fear or influence.

**How to make a complaint**

Early Start Australia will:

- Promptly investigate, remedy and document any consumer grievance regarding choice and control
- Ensure that all Early Start Australia staff and volunteers are aware of and understand Early Start Australia’s policy regarding choice and control

**Risk Management**

Early Start Australia is committed to effectively managing risks through compliance with legislation, alignment with best practice and through a practical approach that carefully plans for and prioritises risks and balances the costs and benefits of action.

**Monitoring and Training**

This policy will be:

- Incorporated into staff training and induction;
- Amended in accordance with any changes to the applicable Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation;
- Monitored through supervision and formal and informal feedback mechanisms;
- Audited in accordance with the internal audit schedule

**Related Legislation or Accreditation Requirements**

- National Disability Standard 1: Rights
- Accreditation/compliance - Relevant State or Territory Disability Service Standards
- Accreditation/compliance – National Standards for Disability Services (2013)
- Accreditation/compliance – National Mental Health Standards 2010
- Compliance – Relevant State / Territory and/or Commonwealth Act
- Compliance – Commonwealth NDIS Act (2013)
- National Disability Insurance Scheme Quality and Safeguarding Framework

**Resources**

- ESA Clinical Process and documents
- Supervision
- Induction / Training
- Supporting policies, procedures and work instructions

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