

CURRENT SITUATION	ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES	EVIDENCE	OUTPUTS	THEORY OF CHANGE	CLIENT OUTCOMES Describe the outcomes for clients/communities achieved for each service type
<p>The target group for the Supported Playgroup are children aged birth – 5 years who have a developmental delay or disability and their families. Clients are primarily from Wollongong, although we have families from Shellharbour and Kiama areas as well.</p> <p>There are a number of families with young children (Birth-5 years) in Wollongong. According to the 2016 Census, there are 12,034 children between the ages of birth - 4 years (Census 2016).</p> <p>In relation to disability, District data profiles show that in Wollongong, 6.4% of the population need help or assistance with core activities. This equates to 13,082 individuals (with an additional 977 in Kiama and 4,593 in Shellharbour (Census, 2016). While this does not only reflect children from birth – 5 years with a developmental delay or disability, it does demonstrate the significance of disability in our region.</p> <p>Families who have children with disabilities face a number of challenges that are unique to their population. A diagnosis of disability or concern about children’s development can cause stress and anxiety on top of that experienced by parents of typically developing children (Felizardo Ribeiro &amp; Amante, 2016; Kerr &amp; McIntosh, 2000). A substantial body of literature documents the stresses experienced by many parents who have a child with a disability. In addition to feelings of grief, loss and guilt, parents commonly</p>	<p><b>TEI Program Activity:</b> Program Activity 4: Provide Targeted Support</p> <p><b>TEI Service Type:</b> Supported Playgroup</p> <p><b>Service Description:</b> Playgroup for Children with Additional Needs</p> <p>Supported playgroups are weekly playgroups facilitated by trained workers. The supported playgroup for Children with Additional Needs is to provide support to children with a disability or developmental delay and their families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free and structured play experiences/activities for children</li> <li>Informal discussions with parents to identify goals and priorities for children so playgroup can provide consistent approaches</li> <li>Targeted experiences/activities to support children’s social, emotional, cognitive, physical and communication development</li> <li>Information and guidance for parents which may include speakers to assist in advocacy, referral to other services or support in accessing an ECEC centre</li> <li>Support for parents in adjusting to life with a child with a disability</li> <li>Networking opportunities for parents</li> </ul>	<p>Supported playgroups have a dual focus on supporting the development and wellbeing of children and their parents (Jackson, 2013) by creating an opportunity for carers to meet and share experiences, and for children to play, learn and socialise (Boddy &amp; Cartmel, 2011: CCCH, 2011: Jackson, 2011, 2013, cited in Commerford &amp; Robinson, 2016)</p> <p>Playgroups are a ‘soft entry’ point for families to become better connected to the informal and formal networks in their communities (Commerford &amp; Robinson, 2016). The social support gathered through these smaller, facilitated groups assists parents in developing knowledge of the local community, gaining confidence in their parenting ability and joining networks with other families, resulting in an increased likelihood that families will feel confident to engage with other services in the future (Moran &amp; Ghate, 2016).</p> <p>Quotes from parents:</p> <p><i>“Being part of the playgroup has helped me grow as a person –they have taught me to embrace the child we have and help us through the whole diagnosis process. The staff will be part of our family forever”</i></p> <p><i>“The beginning of my journey was horrible with lots of tears and self esteem kicking, it grew into laughs, a brand new beautiful preschool, transitioning onto an early intervention preschool, friendships a sense of greater belonging and less blame (and only the big appointments needing someone to come with me to advocate for my loss of words. ) There is no way on this Earth that I could have gotten</i></p>	<p>Number of sessions</p> <p>Number of participants</p> <p>Demographics of participants</p> <p>Number of clients referred to other services</p> <p>Number of participants who report they are satisfied with the service provided</p> <p>Number of participants who report being treated with respect</p>	<p>Supported playgroups can increase participation and belonging to community for both children with a disability and their families. It provides parents with a sense of empowerment and can increase their advocacy skills, through meeting others, sharing experiences and learning about services and ways to access them.</p> <p>Supported playgroups act almost as a community of learners within the wider community, building capacity, increasing social participation through an increase in acceptance and skills relating to parenting a child with a disability, which can have a positive effect on mental health.</p> <p>In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>children benefit from socialising with other children and participating in early learning activities facilitated by trained workers</li> <li>parents develop relationships with other families and learn new parenting skills and techniques</li> <li>families become more familiar with and more likely to use local community services (Families NSW)</li> </ul> <p>Supported playgroups align strongly to an ecological theory and approach which will be revisited in relation to outputs in the future. Bronfenbrenner’s ecological model sees children positioned within nested systems which impact significantly on their development and well-being, and explain the complex interactions of multiple factors, and how these influence young children with disabilities during the early childhood years (Rous, et al, 2007).</p> <p>The child’s interactions with the microsystem (the closest layer to the child) are of particular importance when considering early intervention programs (Copland, 1995), as the success of these programs (including supported playgroup) are influenced by the relationships within all the services in which families are</p>	<p><b>Social and Community: increased participation in community events; increased sense of belonging to their community</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase participation in community life</li> <li>Increase engagement with relevant services</li> <li>Increase community connectedness</li> <li>Increase informal and formal networks</li> </ul> <p><b>Empowerment: Increased client reported self-determination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in advocacy skills</li> <li>Increased confidence in parenting skills</li> </ul> <p><b>Education and Skills: Increased school attendance and achievement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase access to ECEC centres</li> <li>Increase access to NDIS ECEI partner</li> <li>Increase knowledge about services and activities in their community</li> <li>Increase in parenting knowledge</li> <li>Increase in parenting skills</li> </ul> <p><b>Health: improved health of children and young people; improve parental health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved parental mental health</li> <li>Reduced stress in parents</li> </ul>

experience psychological and social consequences such as isolation, social marginalisation, stigmatisation and disempowerment (Seligman & Darling, 2008). An important coping resource is social support, including practical help, information and emotional support, which can, among other functions, enhance family well-being and capacity to parent (Armstrong, Birnie-Lefcovitch, & Ungar, 2015, cited in Wright et al 2019)

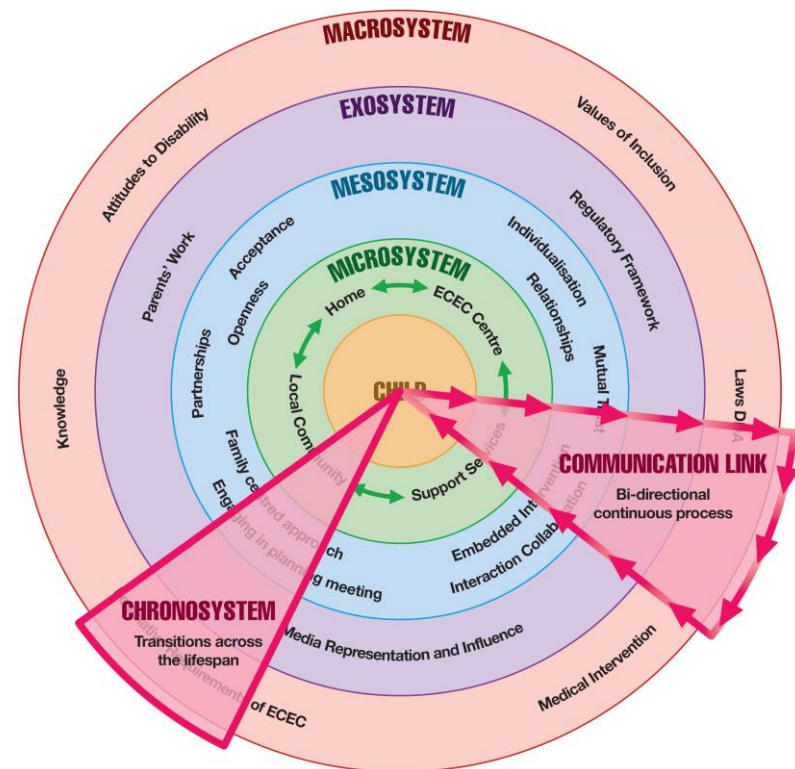
This group is particularly vulnerable to social isolation and increased stress. Without attending supported playgroup at this crucial time, isolation and feelings of despair can increase.

by without the support I have received.”

“The educators have become part of our family and support circle. We love the support, kindness and love they have shown our child and our family”

enmeshed. The importance of the partnerships between family and the supported playgroup sits centrally within the mesosystem of Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory (see diagram below). (Bronfenbrenner, 1992)

**Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model – adapted for children with a disability (Warren, 2013)**



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