



## **Playing and Learning with Other Children**

### **Key messages**

- Children learn when they are playing with children of all abilities
- Children learn by playing together in the local community
- There are many benefits when children of all abilities play together

### **What does playing and learning with other children mean?**

Children play and learn together in their local community and in children's services and school. Playing and learning with other children is sometimes called inclusion and participation. This means children of all abilities playing and learning together. Activities where children can play and learn with other children will vary with age. They include:

- Recreational activities

Recreational activities happen at home when children come to visit, or your child goes to someone else's house and includes things like watching TV or a movie together, playing computer games, hobbies, or listening to music.

- Physical activities

Physical activities can involve going to the playground, swimming, dancing, or joining a sports activity.

- Social activities

Social activities include going on an outing, going to a birthday party, visiting friends or family, or going to an event like a movie, or a concert.

- Skill-based activities

Skill-based activities might include learning singing, art, or cooking.

- Educational activities

Educational activities might include childcare, kindergarten, or school (see tip sheets on early childhood education and school).

### **Why is playing and learning with other children important?**

Being able to play and learn with other children is a human right for all children. Playing and learning with other children is important for:

- Learning to get along with other people
- Sharing interests
- Being part of a group or a team
- Experiencing life outside the home



- Learning new skills
- understanding and acceptance of difference .

When children of all abilities play and learn together it benefits children without a developmental delay as it improves empathy and understanding of difference.

### **What do children learn through playing and learning with other children?**

Children learn through play, and they learn a lot from each other. Playing and learning with other children, helps to learn:

- Communication skills
- Social skills
- Positive behaviours
- School lessons
- Persistence
- Problem-solving skills
- A sense of belonging

All of the children playing and learning together can learn:

- Respect for one another
- Appreciation for diversity
- Skills in teaching others
- A more positive sense of self

There are higher expectations for all children when they play and learn together. Higher expectations can lead to better outcomes for all.

### **Who benefits**

When children of all abilities play and learn together it benefits teachers and group leaders, increasing their skills, knowledge, and satisfaction in their work. Families can benefit emotionally, socially, and financially. Parents may feel more welcomed, meet new people and be more confident to return to work. Playing and learning together creates a fairer and more welcoming society.

### **What are some strategies to support your child to play and learn with other children?**

- Talk to your child about what interests them
- Ask your child about activities they would like to do or places they want to visit
- Think about what they like doing and what they are they good at
- Think about what activities will allow them to succeed
- Talk to the activity organiser about what the activity or program involves and if it will suit your child



- Ask how flexible and inclusive the volunteers or staff at the program are
- Ask what help your child will get to modify any activities
- Ask for a longer trial period just in case things don't work out
- Expect that it will take trial and error to find the right place
- Find out if there are any programs that are designed for children with learning difficulties like your child's.
- Decide if it works better for you if your child attends a more specialised program.

Explaining global developmental delay can help. Sometimes other people can be uncomfortable around children with global developmental delay. They may be unsure what to say, or how to behave. You can help them out. Let people know what your child likes and doesn't like. Tell them if there is anything they need to know about talking with or playing with your child.

### **How do I start?**

Start with people your child likes and activities your child likes to do. Talk with your planner, Key Worker, or local council. There are people and supports available to help your child learn and play with other children.

Reference: A simplified version of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

<https://www.unicef.org.au/upload/unicef/media/unicef-simplified-convention-child-rights.pdf>