



**Department  
of Ageing,  
Disability &  
Home Care**

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# **Children and young people with a disability: Towards an inclusive support framework**

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Ninth Australasian Conference on Child  
Abuse and Neglect, November 2003**

# Concepts of disability

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- Historically, constructions of disability have focused on “otherness” and difference
- A rights-based model underpins current Commonwealth and NSW legislation. This model seeks to ensure that people with a disability can achieve maximum potential as members of the community
- A rights-based model constructs disability by creating an identity based on membership of a minority group
- Entitlement is based on being able to identify oneself as a person with a disability.
- The dichotomy of “normal “ and “different” remains unchallenged



# What has this meant for children and young people with a disability?

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- Some children and young people with a disability have missed out on childhood experiences as they have been treated differently to other children and young people
- Their attachment and affiliative needs have been considered to be less important
- Their educational, developmental, health and recreational needs have sometimes been neglected
- The focus has often remained on their disability

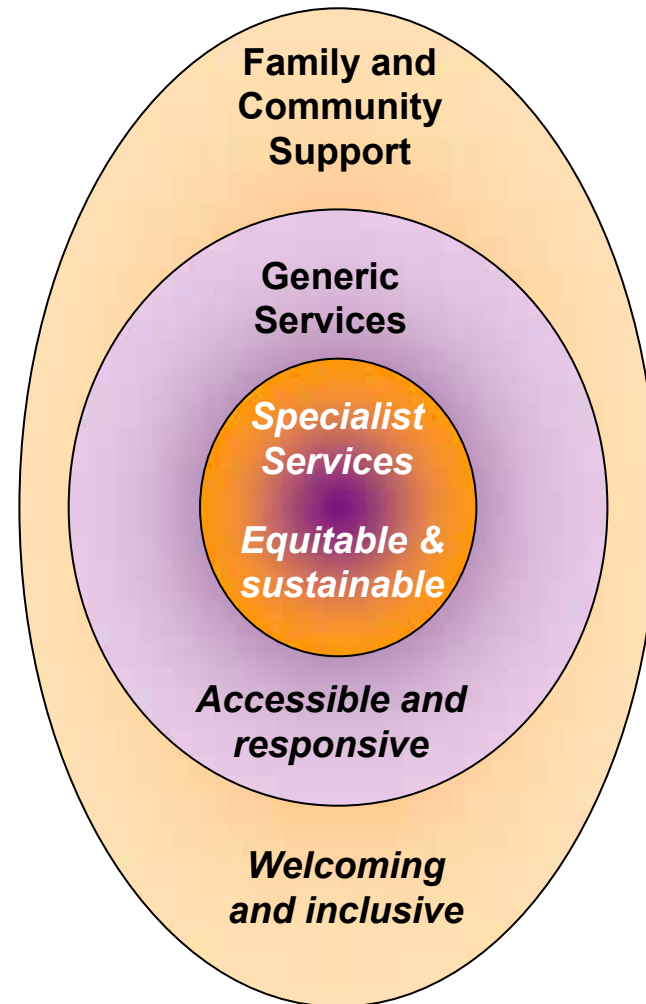
# Towards a new concept of disability

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- A model based on universalism
- Disability is constructed as fluid, continuous and part of the human condition
- Disability is experienced by us all at different stages of our lives
- This conceptualisation encourages us to embrace diversity and social inclusion

# This concept of disability and DADHC's policy outcomes

- Community resources and relationships that facilitate people with a disability and their carers to live independently
- Prevention, early intervention and basic support services that enable people with a disability and their carers to remain in their own home environment
- Equitable and sustainable assistance to people who have higher support needs



# DADHC's role in relation to children and young people with a disability

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- As well as providing specialist services, DADHC must work with other government departments to make mainstream services more accessible to children and young people with a disability e.g:
  - **Health**, so that children and young people with a disability can access generic health, child and adolescent mental health and therapy services
  - **Education**, so that children and young people with a disability can access the education system
  - **Juvenile Justice**, so that children and young people with a disability can receive fair treatment and appropriate support in the juvenile justice system, including diversion as appropriate



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- **Child and family welfare**, so that children and young people with a disability receive care and protection when appropriate
  - **Childcare**, so that children with a disability can access mainstream early childhood services

# Key service delivery principles

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- Prevention and early intervention
- Child-centred family focused practice
- Strengths-based practice
- Building family resilience
- Emphasis on care in the family as in a family like environment

# Signs of a new approach

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- Local Support Coordination: increasing the connection between people with a disability, their families and the local community.
- Early Intervention and Family Disability Support: a new model which aims to support parents and siblings of children and young people with a disability aged 6-18 years
- Intensive Family Support programs: an Aboriginal and a non-Aboriginal agency funded to support children with a disability and their families.



# Challenges

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- How to build a system which values diversity
- How to build family resilience by supporting children and young people with a disability in their families, and supporting families in communities
- How to get the right balance between mainstream child and family services and the specialist disability service system
- How to approach child protection in a way that is positive for children, young people and families



# Challenges

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- How to build a flexible and responsive out-of-home care system which meets the needs of children and young people with a disability
- How to develop effective models for
  - Shared care
  - Temporary care
  - Respite
  - Young people with challenging behaviours