

# Global Developmental Delay

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The **Inclusion Strategies Series** provides practical, simple and effective strategies that educators can implement as part of their day to day practice.

Global Developmental Delay is defined as a significant delay in two or more developmental domains.

A child may have a Global Developmental Delay owing to conditions such as Cerebral Palsy, neuromuscular disorders and/or early environmental deprivation.

Children with a Global Developmental Delay will not necessarily have intellectual delay.

Early diagnosis improves outcomes.

The different areas of development that may be delayed include:

- Motor skills (Gross and Fine) – rolling, sitting up, walking or picking up small objects.
- Speech and language development – identifying sounds, imitating speech sounds, babbling.
- Cognitive development – being able to learn new things and to reason.
- Social and emotional development – making friends, sharing, turn-taking.
- Daily activities – eating, dressing, toileting.

Rett Syndrome is the leading diagnosable cause of Global Developmental Delay while Fragile X is the most common inherited disorder.

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Ongoing tests for a child with Global Developmental Delay assist in identifying the cause.

## Effects on Developmental Areas May Include

### **Social and Emotional**

- Requiring assistance with self help tasks including: feeding, toileting and dressing.
- Showing a delay in social skill development.
- Exhibiting inappropriate behaviours towards other children, such as touching or hugging that is upsetting the other child.

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### **Motor and Physical Development**

- Delays in gross or fine motor skill development.
- Low muscle tone.
- Bumping into things or frequently falling down.
- Becoming listless, lacking stamina or tiring easily.
- Vision and hearing difficulties.
- Seizures.

### **Language and Communication Development**

- Difficulty speaking.
- Not understanding or using appropriate forms of communication.
- Having difficulty in making or expressing choices.

### **Cognitive**

- Learning difficulties.
- Difficulty understanding verbal directions.
- Being easily distracted by noise and visual stimuli.
- Having difficulty understanding concepts of turn taking, sharing and how to enter into play situations.



## Inclusion Strategies

### **Social Development**

- Use strategies to assist the child to separate from parents by setting a routine when saying goodbye, e.g. finding a book to read.
- Value and acknowledge the child's efforts.
- Let other children know what the child is doing to reinforce the concept of him being part of the group. Do this with all children, e.g. "Look, Jack is doing a puzzle as well."

### **Physical Development**

- Plan for success by providing simple

obstacle courses that the child is capable of completing.

- Provide finger plays to develop fine motor skills and to encourage the use of both hands in a controlled manner.
- Develop fine motor skills by using adaptive equipment such as a non slip mat under the drawing paper, thick crayons, thick handled paint brushes that are easy to grasp, etc.

### **Language**

- Use of large clear pictures to reinforce what you are saying.
- Paraphrase what the child has said.
- Clarify types of communication

methods the child may use, e.g. Makaton.

- Label areas in the room with words and pictures.
- Use sequencing cards to support the child’s learning of how to predict what comes next and how to associate events.
- Provide puppets/pictures as extra props when using finger plays and songs.
- Reduce the number of instructions in one statement to allow time for the child to gain an understanding of what has been said, e.g. “Hold the puppet up high.” rather than “Hold the puppet up high and wave it around so that all the children can see it.”
- Once the child understands “Hold the puppet up high” you can then

add, “Good, now all the children can see it.”

- Ascertain from parents words that their child is familiar with, e.g. family words that represent aspects of their child’s life. Use these in your program.

**Cognitive**

- Encourage the use of a bright, easily recognisable bag so that the child can recognise his hook or locker.
- Plan experiences that are relevant to the child’s world.
- Gain information from parents about their child’s likes, interests and dislikes and incorporate these into your program.
- Break tasks down into smaller steps, e.g. place one puzzle piece at a time and gradually work towards

completing the puzzle, rather than expecting the puzzle to be finished in one go.

- Allow the child time to complete tasks and practice skills at his own pace.
- Acknowledge the child’s level of achievement, e.g. “You placed that piece in the puzzle, well done!” rather than just “Good boy.”

**References**

Noah’s Ark Children’s Services Resource Unit, Fact Sheet—Global Developmental Delay (2012)

[www.aan.com/practice/guideline](http://www.aan.com/practice/guideline)

[www.rch.org.au](http://www.rch.org.au)



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**Important things to remember:**

- Each child diagnosed with an additional need will be different and individual.
- Gain information from the parents as to what characteristics of the additional need their child displays.
- Work closely with the parents as well as any additional support specialists, e.g. therapists who may be involved with the child.
- Gain an understanding from the parent as to what is the most important aspect of their child attending your service. What is it that parents hope to gain from using your service?

The inclusion strategies featured in this fact sheet are just some examples which may be applied to support the inclusion process. This list is only the start and is dependent on a variety of factors such as environment, length of time the child is in care, the child’s interest, likes, dislikes and skills already achieved.