

Being the first to raise issues with a family.

Raising concerns about a child's development is never easy. However, it is important in early years education not to let these concerns go unaddressed. Intervention supports such as therapies are proven to be most effective when implemented as early as possible.

As educators, it is a balancing act. We need to work with the skills of the child and target their individual learning goals, as well as consider the readiness of the parents/carers to address what is happening for their child.

As educators, when thinking about raising concerns, it is vital to plan how you will do this. Taking the time to ensure you have all the information you need and setting up an appropriate environment/situation to raise the concern will hopefully lead to the most positive outcome.

Think about:

- Do you have enough child observations and examples of these to be able to share with the parent/carer?
- Setting up at suitable time and location for the meeting. Is there an option for the child to be cared for whilst the meeting takes place? This could be at the kindergarten or with a family member or friend.
- Ensure the environment is private enough that the parents/carers feel safe and comfortable. This should make it more conducive to an open discussion.
- As the lead educator, are you comfortable enough to have the meeting with the parent/carer on your own? Would it be suitable to have a co-educator attending the meeting too? This could be someone who also works with the child and will be certain to have child observations to share.
- Aim to start the discussion with some positive observations about the child. This could include showing the family some of the child's work or photos from when in attendance in the program.
- Ask if the parents/carers have had any concerns in the past with their child's development? Has anyone else ever raised a concern? This may then lead into asking if the child has been seen by any therapists, doctors etc.

- Families may become emotional during this time. Give them time to share their story and listen well. Showing you care will assist in continuing to develop your relationship and trust with them so you can work as a team.
- Aim to gently bring up what you have noticed through observations (use the documented evidence) about the child.
- Offer your ideas on how the parents/carers could seek further supports and what you can do to assist with this. This could include information regarding services the family could access e.g before the meeting print off details about relevant services that can be given to the parents/carers. This should contain information about the service, phone numbers etc. This is also a time to share referral pathways and how to do this. If you can assist with the referral process then do so.
- Offer your ongoing support. Perhaps plan for another catch up in a few weeks or a month. Let them know your door is always open if they need it.
- Document all you can from the meeting and provide a copy to the family/carer for their own records.

For more information contact the Kindergarten Inclusion Support Coordinator at Gateways via [Contact Us](#) or by phoning 5221 2984.