

# RESEARCH PROPOSAL OVERVIEW

***“Empowering families and centre staff for a successful transition into early childhood settings for children with disabilities”***



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2009

# PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

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1. BACKGROUND
2. GAP
3. PROPOSED RESEARCH TOPIC
4. APPROACH
5. EXECUTION
6. WHY BE INVOLVED?

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# DEFINITIONS

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## EARLY CHILDHOOD

Period of prior to school age



## EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS

Centre based settings for children – eg. Preschool, long-day care



## DISABILITIES

The loss or reduction of functional ability which results from an impairment (WHO 1948) when a child requires additional assistance to have their needs met

## BACKGROUND TO MY RESEARCH

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- Historical perspective
- Enrolment vs Inclusion
- Transition to school program
- Informal observation of how children are 'included'
- Informal discussions with parents highlighting concerns
- Strong belief in Social Justice (Rawls 1975)

## PRIOR RESEARCH

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Much research has been done into Early Childhood education and children with disabilities (ECICP 2007).



*... Yet little social justice research has focused on families accessing early childhood centres.*

## INITIAL LITERATURE – THEMES

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The initial literature review highlighted a range of themes that emerge, including:

- Early intervention
- Finding appropriate care
- Stress
- Training
- Attitude

Information from the literature review is available in conference packages. Participants can contact me for further information.

# INITIAL LITERATURE - GROUPS

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- 2 significant groups
  - Parents of children with disabilities
  - Centre Staff



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## THE GAP

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- No research to date has identified issues relating to transition into Early Childhood settings
- Necessity of exploring transition further



## MY RESEARCH

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My proposed research is different to research I have read to date

- Transition into early childhood centres
- Social justice perspective
- Action research framework
- Differing methodology to bring about depth and breadth
- Advocacy viewpoint

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## RESEARCH FOCUS

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- Issues involved in transition of children with disabilities into Early Childhood services in order to facilitate inclusion
- Will inform the development of strategies to increase inclusion and successful collaboration between parents and staff during transition process

**“Empowering families  
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successful transition  
into early childhood  
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disabilities”**

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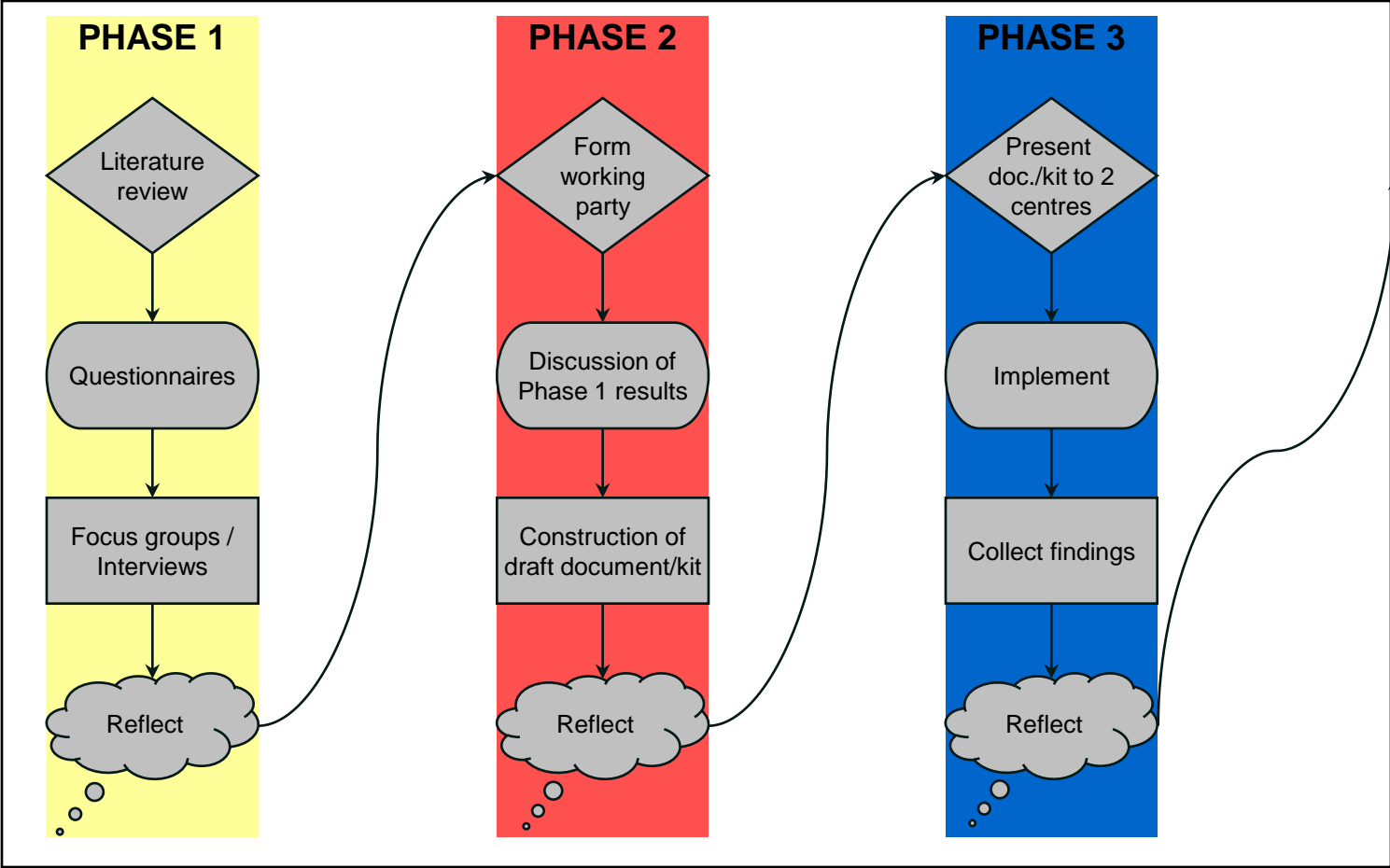
3. PROPOSED RESEARCH

**4. APPROACH**

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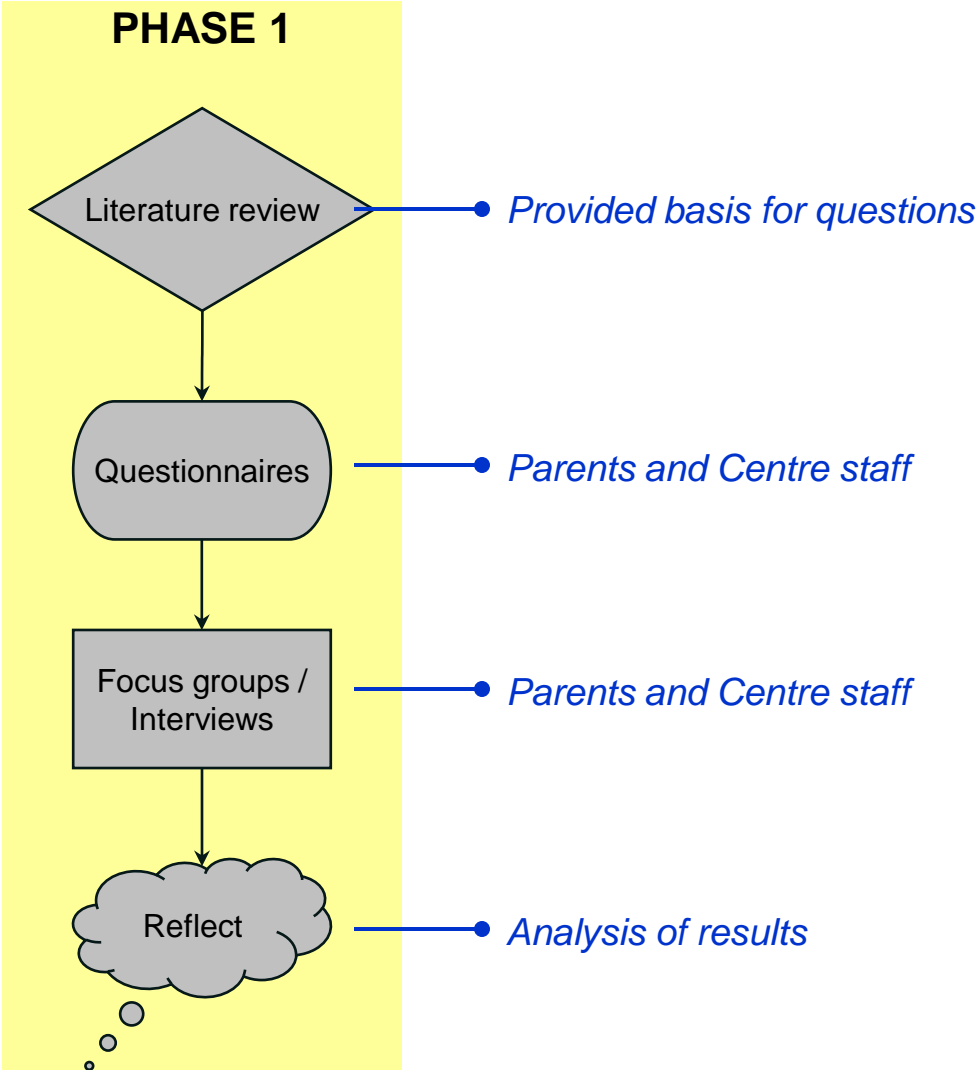
# PROGRESSIVE PROBLEM SOLVING WITH ACTION RESEARCH



Adapted from Riel, 2007

# PHASE 1 – INITIAL DATA COLLECTION

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# PHASE 1: DATA COLLECTION



## STRAND 1

Parents

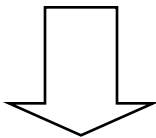


## STRAND 2

Centre Staff



Questionnaires

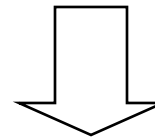


Focus Groups

Information gathered from all questionnaires will influence the content and facilitation approaches for the focus groups and individual interviews



Questionnaires



Individual Interviews



## PHASE 1 DATA ANALYSIS

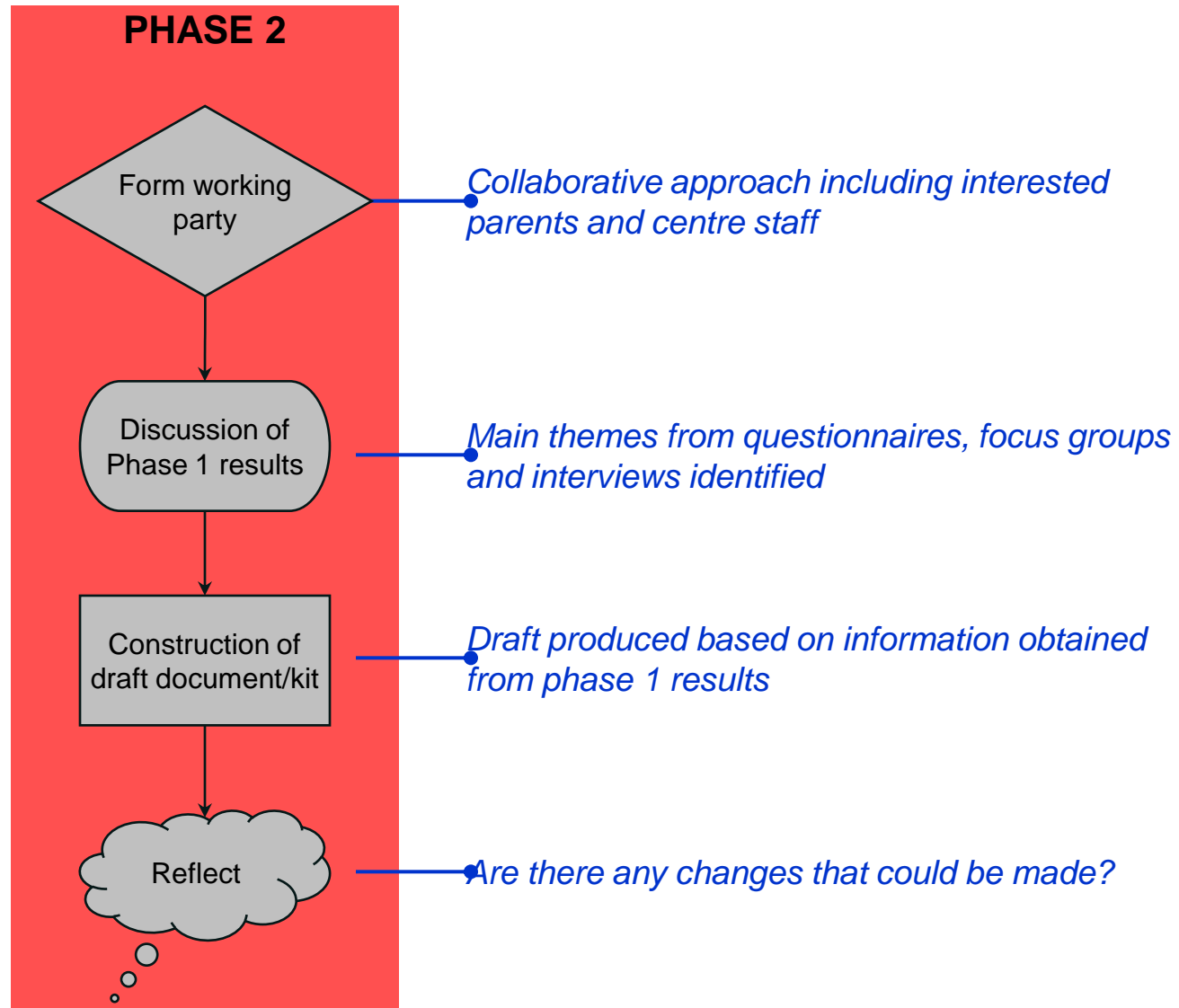
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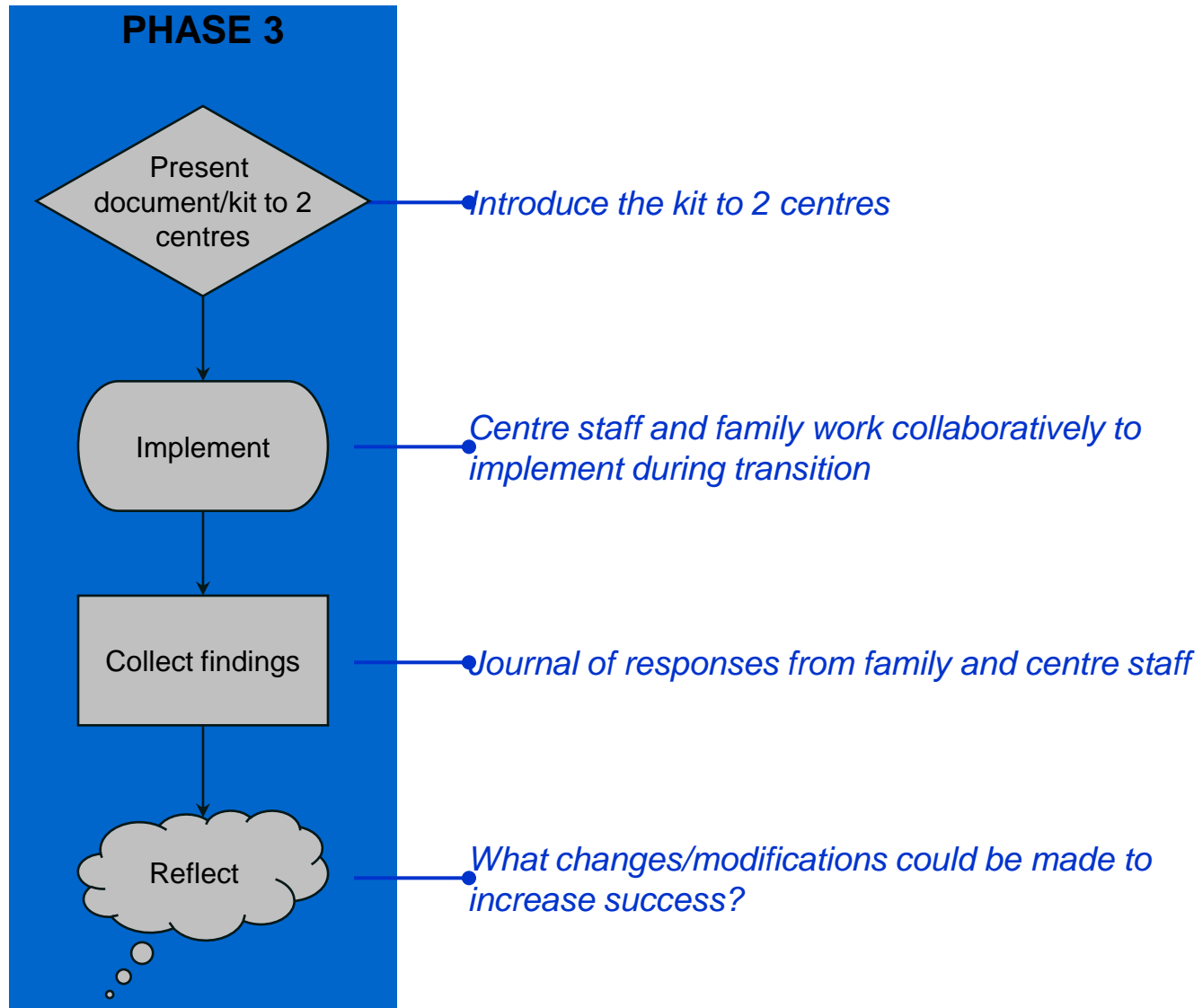
- Mixture of forced choice and open ended descriptive questions
- Plan to record information (after establishing codes) from questionnaires onto data base to identify links
- Questions / issues for focus groups and interviews will be determined from questionnaire information. Issues will arise from questionnaire responses from both centre staff and families
- Focus groups and interviews will be transcribed and patterns or links identified

## PHASE 2

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# PHASE 3



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## GEOGRAPHIC AREA

### *Early Childhood settings and parents of children with disabilities in the Illawarra area*



My research will focus on centres from the northern suburbs of Wollongong to as far south as Gerringong

## **SAMPLE SIZE: PARENTS**



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# **Purposeful sampling through Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC)**

## **QUESTIONNAIRES**



***Approximately 50 families – numbers unknown as families will voluntarily choose to participate***

## **FOCUS GROUPS**



***Approximately 20 parents – 4 groups of 5 parents each – voluntary participation***

# SAMPLE SIZE: EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE STAFF



## QUESTIONNAIRES



***Mailout to approximately 125 individual centres.***

***These include private centres, community based centres, council centres and church affiliated centres.***

***Will include both long day care centres and preschools***

## INTERVIEWS



***Ideally at least 10 individuals, but this will be determined by volunteer participation***

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

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- Do parents in the Illawarra encounter difficulties in the transition of their children with disabilities into Early Childhood settings?
- What are the issues / constraints / successes for parents when enrolling their child with disabilities in an Early Childhood centre?
- What are the issues / constraints / successes for Early Childhood centre staff when enrolling children with disabilities into their services?
- Are there particular collaborative processes or documents that centre staff and/or parents believe would facilitate a smoother transition into early childhood centres?

## SUB-QUESTIONS: FAMILIES

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- Have the families of children with disabilities experienced any stress and anxiety relating to their child enrolling in an Early Childhood centre?
- What concerns do families have about their child with disabilities being enrolled in an Early Childhood centre?
- What issues / constraints exist for their child to be enrolled in the Early Childhood centre of their choice?
- What do these families believe could make the process of transition more inclusive for their child and themselves?

## SUB-QUESTIONS: CENTRE STAFF

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- What do centre staff identify as barriers or difficulties in including children with disabilities?
- Does having children with disabilities in the centre provide extra challenges and stresses? Why?
- What are the perceived benefits for centre staff in enrolling children with disabilities into the centre?
- What do centre staff believe could make the process of transition into the centre easier for themselves, the child and family?

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## IMPORTANCE OF INVOLVEMENT BY EARLY CHILDHOOD STAFF

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- Staff are working directly with children with disabilities and their families
- Sharing ideas helps all involved to learn more
- Will benefit staff by giving them more understanding and skills in relation to children with disabilities and their families
- Provides networking opportunities
- Recognition for individuals and their centres