

Position Description

Position Title	Early Childhood Practitioner
Directorate / Service / Program	Services/Children's Services/Early Childhood Approach
Reports to	Team Leader Early Childhood Approach
Location	Geelong/Colac
Classification	Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award Level 5
Date Revised	April 2025

ABOUT US

We are Meli, inspired by the word Meliorism. The belief that the world can be made better through human effort.

Meli is a Victorian not-for-profit organisation, offering a unique combination of services to support members of our community throughout their lifetime, from early childhood through to adolescence and adulthood.

Everyone faces challenges occasionally, and Meli is here to lend compassionate help, and to take a preventative and early response approach – no matter how big or small a problem.

Our Purpose: Supporting people, strengthening communities.

Our Vision: A fair, safe and inclusive community where everyone can thrive.

Our Values: Build Connection, Show Courage, Inspire Action, Celebrate Difference, Be Dynamic.

To learn more about Meli please visit meli.org.au.

POSITION OVERVIEW

Meli delivers the NDIS Early Childhood Approach (ECA) across the Barwon region. The ECA provides support to children younger than 6 with developmental concern/delay and children younger than 9 with disability. We work in collaboration with parents and carers to ensure their children are connected with the most appropriate supports to develop and participate in daily activities at home and in the community.

Early Childhood Practitioners use their strong knowledge and expertise of child development combined with a family centred, strengths-based approach to engage with children with developmental delay/concern or disability and their families. They use assessment tools, information gathering and observations to determine the most appropriate supports needs including:

- Providing information and connection to mainstream and community supports
- Providing practical information that's relevant to their child's needs
- Providing Early Supports based on parental capacity building and coaching
- Supporting to apply to access to the NDIS
- Providing information and support to ensure families understand their NDIS funded supports
- Supporting Inclusion in mainstream and community settings.

This provision is in accordance with the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act (2013), the National Disability Insurance Scheme Amendment Act (2024) and Best Practice National Guidelines in Early Intervention.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

Duties of this position may include, but are not limited to the following:

Early Connections

- Undertake initial assessment of referrals. Through interview, assessment tools, observation and strong child development knowledge make recommendations on appropriate support options in line with NDIS operational guidelines and criteria.
- Connect families with relevant information to support their understanding of their child's development.
- Provide timely and quality linkages to appropriate supports delivered by mainstream and community services.
- Prepare accurate, professional reports, clinical notes and documentation to support decision making that are culturally sensitive and safe.

Early Supports

- Engage with families/carers to deliver short term supports to build parental capacity in understanding and supporting their child's development across their natural settings. Delivery of supports will include individual supports and group programs.
- Provide strategies and resources to build parent's ability to foster their child's development at home and in the community.
- Support all caregivers to ensure a consistency of approach to the child's support.
- Link family with appropriate, relevant information and services to further support their child's development.
- Undertake assessments to measure effectiveness of Early Supports delivery.

Participant Support

- Support families to apply for NDIS access when child meets appropriate criteria as per NDIS Act and Operational Guidelines.
- Gather all relevant information from family report, observation, and professional reports to support the NDIS to provide appropriate funded supports.
- Assist families to understand their NDIS funded plan and appropriate use of funds, link to NDIS participant portal and source allied health supports.
- Assist families to link with appropriate community and mainstream supports to support their child's social and community participation.
- Liaise with external stakeholders including allied health service providers, support coordinators, early education settings.
- Provide accurate and detailed information about the NDIS to families, external stakeholders and mainstream/community service.

Early Childhood Team

- Use NDIS client management system (PACE) to ensure timely and accurate records are maintained of all NDIS related data.
- Follow practices and procedures to enable service delivery monitoring, evaluation and reporting against the Performance Management Framework (PMF)
- Contribute to the identification of families that have complexity and / or vulnerability such as CALD, DFFH involvement, citizenship concerns, and complex disability. Monitoring of these families to ensure they navigate potential barriers such as non-engagement, residency requirements and mainstream supports.
- Effective time management and strong ability to work autonomously to navigate own caseload within NDIS and Meli internal timeframes and KPIs.
- Compassionate, family-centred, strength-based approach to client service to provide the best and most appropriate outcomes for children with developmental delay/concern or disability that is inclusive and responsive to cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Develop and maintain strong knowledge of local community and mainstream services, online resources and other programs to support children under 9 years of age and their families.
- Identify the concerns, issues or barriers the families of children with developmental delay and disability experience in accessing or participating in community and mainstream services.
- Liaise with community and mainstream services to build their capacity to provide inclusive programs and spaces that maximise the opportunity for children of all ability to meaningfully participate.

Issue Date: April 2025

Custodian: Early Childhood Approach Manager Meli Group

Approved Document

Review Date: April 2026

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Organisational Accountabilities:

- Other reasonable duties as directed.
- Apply Meli's Code of Conduct to contribute to a professional, positive work environment.
- Apply Meli's quality and risk management frameworks.
- Understand and comply with the standards of a Child Safe organisation.
- Active involvement in professional development to build knowledge and skills.
- Make decisions following Meli values, relevant standards, practices, policies, procedures, regulations, industrial instruments and legislation.

QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- Qualification in Early Childhood Education, Speech Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy or Psychology or equivalent and minimum 5 years' experience working with children under 9 and their families.
- Demonstrated strong understanding of child development for children under 9 years of age and the ability to identify the needs of children with developmental delay/concern or disability.
- Demonstrated strong communication, interpersonal and negotiation skills including the ability to engage with children and their families in a range of settings.
- Demonstrated strong time management and organisational skills with proven ability to work independently
- Current Victoria Driver's Licence

OTHER REQUIREMENTS OF THE ROLE

All employees must undergo and maintain a range of satisfactory checks as a condition of employment. These include:

- Working with Children Check
- NDIS Worker Screening Check
- National Police Check
- International Police Check (if required)
- Have the right to work in Australia

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

- Meli employees
- Children under 9 years of age and their families
- National Disability Insurance Agency
- Allied Health and other NDIS funded service providers
- Community and Mainstream support services who work with children under 9 years of age.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS & ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS OF THE ROLE

Meli is committed to creating inclusive spaces that are accessible for everyone by reducing and/or removing barriers through reasonable adjustments.

The following table shows the physical and psychological work environment characteristics that have been identified as part of this role. Where possible, Meli will make reasonable adjustments to support individuals to succeed in their roles.

REQUIRED ACTIVITIES / WORKING ENVIRONMENT

FREQUENCY

Computer based tasks, sedentary position, office based	Often
Repetitive manual tasks	Rarely
Working in buildings which may have stairs (Reasonable adjustments can be made)	Sometimes
Driving, in & out of vehicles (If driving is required, must hold current Victorian Driver Licence)	Often
Bending, lifting, pushing, pulling	Rarely
Working alone or at a co-located site	Sometimes
Confrontational/confronting situations (Due to the nature of our work, there may be times when staff are exposed to behaviour, language and/or situations that can be confronting)	Rarely
Working outside in differing weather conditions	Rarely
Working on-call and/or after hours	Rarely
Attending external locations including client homes	Often

INCLUSION STATEMENT

Meli is committed to being a place where everyone has a sense of belonging.

We embrace the unique perspectives and experience of our people and our community, and their voice is at the heart of our values and decision making.

We aim to be courageous as we learn, grow, and evolve as an accessible, inclusive and safe organisation for people of all identities.

We are working to create a team of people who reflect the diverse community we support. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, LGBTQIA+, culturally diverse people, those living with a disability, and those looking to return to the workforce following a break in their career, are encouraged to apply for our roles.

CHILD SAFETY STATEMENT

Meli is committed to child safety in every aspect of the organisation. We take deliberate steps to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse and neglect. Our organisation fosters openness to create a culture in which everyone – staff, parents, carers, and children – feel confident, enabled, and supported to safely disclose child safety or wellbeing concerns.

We have zero tolerance of any abuse or maltreatment of children. We are committed to ensuring children and young people are able to actively participate in decisions that affect their lives.

We understand our legal and moral obligations to treat any child safety concerns seriously. We report any allegations and wellbeing concerns to authorities. We are committed to the cultural safety of all children and young people. This includes providing a safe environment for children and young people with a disability, who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds or who identify as LGBTI+.

Meli's policies and practices promote the safety and wellbeing of children and establish an effective, consistent approach to prevent, respond to and encourage the reporting of allegations of child abuse and harm.

All children, their families and carers should feel welcome at Meli, including feeling able to express their identity and raise concerns about their own or others' safety.

EMPLOYEE DECLARATION

I have read and understood this Position Description and in signing this document agree that I can fulfill all the requirements of the position described in this document. Additionally, I agree to notify management immediately of any change in my capacity to meet any of the requirements outlined in this Position Description.

Name:	Signature:	Date:

Note: The intention of the position description is to provide an outline of scope and responsibilities, at a point in time. Please note, responsibilities may evolve in accordance with organisational needs.