

National Disability Insurance Scheme: FAQs

If your child has a significant and permanent disability, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) supports your child, as well as you and your family. Our guide has answers to your questions about the NDIS.



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What is the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)?

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a single, national scheme that funds **reasonable and necessary support** to help people with disability reach goals throughout life. It also supports carers of people with disability.

The NDIS works with people individually and recognises that people have different needs and goals. It gives people choice about the support they need to live the life they want.

If your child has a significant and permanent disability or developmental delay, the NDIS helps you and your child get services and support in your community. It also gives you funding for support like early intervention therapies or one-off items like wheelchairs or communication devices.

The NDIS is run by the **National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)**.

When will the NDIS be available in my area?

The NDIS is being introduced gradually across Australia. The Australian and state and territory governments started introducing it in stages from July 2013. It will be available everywhere by 2019-20, except for Western Australia where trials will continue.

Find out [when the NDIS will be available in your area](#).

Can my child access the NDIS?

Children aged 0-6 years

If your child is aged 0-6 years he **doesn't need a diagnosis of disability** to benefit from the NDIS.

Your child must:

- be an Australian citizen, a permanent resident, or other visa holder with a Protected Special Category Visa
- live in an area where the NDIS is operating.

Children aged 7 years and older

If your child is aged seven years or older, to access the NDIS your child must:

- have a **permanent and significant disability or developmental delay** that affects her ability to take part in everyday activities
- be an Australian citizen, a permanent resident, or other visa holder with a Protected Special Category Visa
- live in an area where the NDIS is operating.

You can use the [NDIS access checklist](#) to find out whether your child meets these requirements.

If my child can access the NDIS, what happens next?

Children aged 0-6 years

You'll meet with an [NDIS early childhood partner](#).

You'll discuss your child's needs and goals. You'll talk about the support your child gets from family, friends, other services (like the education system) and community activities or service providers. And you'll talk about how well this support works for your child.

You'll also talk about general things like how your child usually manages daily activities, and more specific topics like how much support you think your child needs for certain tasks.

Your NDIS early childhood partner will work with you to decide on support for your child and family.

Depending on your child's needs, the NDIS early childhood partner might:

- give you information or emotional support
- refer you to mainstream services like community health services, playgroups or peer support groups
- provide or help you find early intervention for your child – for example, speech therapy or occupational therapy.

If your child needs more intensive, individualised or longer-term support, your NDIS early childhood partner can recommend that your child quickly moves to an individualised support plan.

Your early childhood partner will help you develop the individualised NDIS support plan for your child. Your early childhood partner will submit the plan to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) for approval.

Once the plan is approved, your child will start to get NDIS funding. You choose the providers you want to work with and start putting the plan into action.

Children aged 7 years and older

If your child meets the requirements to access the NDIS, you'll meet with an [NDIA planner](#) or an [NDIS local area coordination partner](#).

You'll talk about your child's needs and goals. You'll also talk about the support your child gets from family, friends, mainstream providers (like the education system) and community activities or service providers. And you'll talk about how well this support works for your child.

You'll also talk about general things like how your child usually manages daily activities, and more specific topics like how much support you think your child needs for certain tasks.

This might take more than one meeting, and your child might also need to be assessed by a specialist.

You and your NDIS professional will work together to develop an individualised NDIS support plan for your child. The NDIS professional will submit it to the NDIA for approval.

Once the plan is approved, your child will start to get NDIS funding. You choose the providers you want to work with and start putting the plan into action.

What is an individualised NDIS support plan?

Children with intensive or longer-term needs might be able to access an NDIS support plan. Your child's individualised plan will be based on his goals or the goals you have for your child. It will cover the support your child needs to meet these goals.

Your child's plan will include:

- informal support that you and your family give your child
- support from community and mainstream providers (not funded by NDIS)
- support that is funded by the NDIS.

NDIS-funded support might include therapies, technologies or equipment to help your child with daily living activities, or modifications to your home.

NDIS won't fund support that is the responsibility of mainstream services like the education or health systems.

You can **review your child's plan regularly**, generally every 12 months. This lets you, your child and your NDIS professional talk about what is and isn't working, change your child's goals if you need to, and adjust supports as your child's circumstances change.

You can also ask to have your child's plan reviewed at other times if her circumstances change before your next scheduled review.

What if I'm not happy with the support in my child's plan?

Your NDIS professional will talk with you about what support is considered reasonable and necessary for your child. But if you don't agree with the support in your child's plan, you can contact the National Disability Support Agency (NDIA) or ask for a review of the plan.

A senior NDIA staff member will decide whether to review your child's plan based on the information you've provided.

What does reasonable and necessary support mean?

The NDIS funds reasonable and necessary support that **helps your child reach his goals in a range of areas**. For example, these goals might include taking part in social and community activities, and looking after his health and wellbeing.

To be considered reasonable and necessary, **support must be:**

- related to your child's disability
- value for money
- likely to work and benefit your child
- based on evidence.

Reasonable and necessary support **doesn't include day-to-day living costs** that aren't related to your child's disability support needs.

Your child's reasonable and necessary support takes into account any informal support that your child already has. This means the informal arrangements that are part of your family life or broader community network, as well as other mainstream support like that provided by the health and education systems.

When the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) makes decisions about which supports are reasonable and necessary for your child, it refers to rules and guidelines in the **National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013** (NDIS Act).

What services and equipment can be funded under the NDIS?

There is no minimum funding under the NDIS. Your child's plan outlines goals and aspirations, and being part of the NDIS means your child gets access to the support she needs to meet these goals, regardless of her situation or diagnosis.

Types of supports that the NDIS might fund include:

- support for daily living activities like getting dressed and eating
- transport so that your child can take part in community or social activities, or go to school
- therapeutic support including behaviour support
- modifications to your home, including design and construction
- equipment or technology to help your child
- modifications to your car.

Generally, NDIS won't fund support that:

- isn't related to your child's disability
- duplicates other support already funded by mainstream services like the education or health systems
- is part of day-to-day living costs that aren't related to your child's support needs
- is likely to cause harm to your child or pose a risk to others.

For example, the NDIS will fund early interventions like speech therapy or physiotherapy. But it won't fund inclusion support for kindergartens or modifications to preschool buildings, because these are the responsibility of the early childhood education system.

For school-age children the NDIS will fund support that enables a child to go to school, like help with self-care at school, specialist transport or a hearing aid. But it won't fund teachers or learning-specific aids like computers, because these are the responsibility of the education system.

How will my child's plan be managed?

When you and your child meet with an NDIS professional to develop your child's plan, you'll also talk about how you want to manage your child's funding. You can have as little or as much help as you need.

There are four options.

Self-managed

You can choose to manage the funding for your child's support. You can do this yourself, or you can have a nominee do this on your behalf. This nominee might be a member of your family, a friend or a carer.

Registered plan management provider

You can choose to have a registered plan management provider manage some or all of the funding for your child's support. This management provider can find and organise support, pay the providers, take care of the paperwork and work with your selected service providers to decide how and when your child gets support.

NDIA managed

You can choose to have the NDIA manage the funding for your child's support. Under this option you choose the service providers you want from the registered provider list on the NDIS website, and you organise the support your child needs directly with them. The NDIA can help you [find and get in touch with the registered providers](#). The NDIA then pays the providers directly.

A combination of the management options above

You can choose different options for different support. Your child's plan might have a combination of options.

Can I choose disability service providers?

You'll be in control of which service providers you choose and when and how your child gets support, no matter how you choose to manage your child's plan.

If the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is managing the funding for some or all of your child's supports, you need to choose providers that are registered with the NDIS. You can find [local providers registered with the NDIS](#). If you want to use a provider that isn't on the list, you can ask for it to be registered.

If you're managing your child's funding yourself or using a registered plan management provider, you can use support from any provider, including providers not registered with the NDIS. But if you use a non-registered provider, you need to think about the quality, risks, safeguards and potential additional costs

that might be involved.

How does the NDIA support families and carers?

The informal support that you and your family give your child is taken into account when your child's plan is developed. The NDIA works with families and carers to help you keep supporting your child.

Your NDIS professional will ask you about:

- whether you need help to keep giving your child the same level of care
- what might affect your ability to continue caring for your child in the future
- whether there are other carers who could also provide support.

What if my child can't access the NDIS?

If your child doesn't meet the access requirements for the NDIS, you can still get lots of information about other support that could benefit your child. The NDIS can also help you with referrals.

You'll keep getting your previous support. For example, if your child has support under the [Helping Children with Autism](#) or [Better Start](#) programs, he'll keep getting funding under those programs. The Department of Social Services will manage this funding until your funds have been spent, or your child reaches the maximum age for the program.

How is the NDIS funded?

The NDIS is jointly funded by the Australian and state and territory governments and is partially funded by money raised by an increase in the Medicare levy.



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Web links

- ▶ National Disability Insurance Scheme and Better Start: FAQs
 - ▶ National Disability Insurance Scheme and HCWA: FAQs
 - ▶ NDIS services for children: overview
 - ▶ The NDIS pathway: how to get NDIS support
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