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## NDIS frequently asked questions

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### What is the NDIS?

The NDIS or **Nation Disability Insurance Scheme** is the new State and Commonwealth funded program to provide funding for services and supports for people with an eligible disability.

This is the biggest reform to our health services system since Medicare.

The NDIS is meant to replace other disability support systems and their funded services including:

- Helping Children with Autism
- Better Start
- Ageing Disability and Home Care
- Australian Government Hearing Services Program

The goal of the NDIS is to shift support funding from being based on labels and diagnoses to being about a person's individual needs in gaining independence and integrating into the community.

Previously Early Intervention funding, like other disability support funding, was the same for every child at \$6,000 per year.

Now, instead of funding every child with a diagnosis such as Autism the same amount for 2 years, NDIS funding will be based on the specific goals and needs of each child for their next 12 months.

And whereas before the age limit to receive funding was 5 years old, with the NDIS there is no age restriction!

The NDIS is also about giving you more choice: you now have much greater flexibility in choosing the services you use to help support your child with Autism.

### The NDIS Rollout

The NDIS is rolling out in stages, beginning in 2016. On 1<sup>st</sup> July, the NDIS was rolled out to Northern Sydney, South West Sydney, and Western Sydney.

Next will be South Sydney, Illawarra and Sydney Proper beginning on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017.

Because there is a lot of work involved in the rollout, it may be 6 to 12 months or even longer before you get to meet with a Support Planner and begin the process of getting your NDIS funding.

The good news is the National Disability Insurance Agency, the body responsible for dispersing NDIS funding, has learnt a lot from their trial sites, and improvements are made every week.

We have been heavily involved in providing feedback to the NDIA and Parliament through a number of peak bodies.

We've consulted with ADHC and NGO organisations around the preparation of the Disability sector for NDIS and have been involved in reviewing the NDIS with the Council for Intellectual Disability & Ombudsman's Office.

We are also in the process of helping 350 people transition to the NDIS and have successfully assisted over 120 people so far.

The rollout is starting with adults and children who are currently accessing Ageing Disability and Home Care funded services as well as children in out-of-home care services.

Many of you with children at home or with FAHCSIA (Helping Children with Autism or Better Start) funding are likely to be well after these people, so don't race to spend your funding before the transition.

## **Supports Funded Under the NDIS**

The rules of what supports and people can receive funding under the NDIS are outlined in the National Disability Insurance Scheme Act.

To meet the NDIS Early Intervention funding rules, your child needs to:

- Have an impairment or condition that is likely to be lifelong that stops them from doing everyday things by themselves.
- Be under 6 years of age with a developmental delay that requires more help with self-care, communication, learning or motor skills than other children their age.

Early Intervention specific funding has a preference for transdisciplinary service models where you can get multiple services from the one organisation, like at Real Therapy Solutions.

This funding comes in three levels based on your child's needs:

- Low – \$6,000 to \$8,000 per annum
- Moderate – \$8,000 to \$12,000 per annum
- High – \$12,000 to \$16,000 per annum

In order to receive this funding, your service provider needs to show improvement over 6 months and your child can only receive this funding for 2 years.

Even if your child doesn't meet the Early Intervention requirements, however, it's possible they may still be eligible for funding in other ways.

Supports funded under the NDIS must be required as a result of the disability, and identified as reasonable and necessary.

This means someone else in the same situation would benefit from and need a similar service.

In order for a support to be deemed reasonable and necessary by the NDIA it must:

- Be related to the participant's disability.
- Not include day-to-day living costs unrelated to disability support needs.
- Represent value for the money.
- Be likely to be effective and beneficial to the participant.
- Take into account informal supports given to participants by families, carers, networks, and the community.

Reasonable and necessary supports do not include:

- Supports unrelated to their disability.
- Rent, groceries, utilities etc.
- Something funded elsewhere– e.g. school support or mental health services covered by MHCP.

Examples of supports not covered by the NDIS include:

- Paediatrician's consultations and medication management.
- Psychology services for social skills support and anger management due to cognitive disability or autism will be funded, while those for anxiety will not.

There are 14 Support Categories the NDIS will fund:

1. Assistance with daily life at home, in the community, education and at work.
2. Transport to access daily activities.
3. Certain independent living supports.
4. Daily living skills training/therapy to assist independence.
5. Social skills and behaviour support.
6. Improved living arrangements.
7. Improved health and wellbeing through dieticians, personal trainers, or exercise physiologists.
8. Learning improvement support.
9. Finding and keeping a job.
10. Increased social and community participation.
11. Improved life choices.
12. Assistive technology.

13. Vehicle modifications.

14. Home Modifications.

Examples of Aids and Assistive Technologies covered under the NDIS include:

- iPads
- Wheelchairs
- Tricycles
- Adapted Books
- Toy Adaptations
- Recreational Equipment
- Bed Rails
- Continence Packages

To learn more about the supports covered under the NDIS, see these factsheets:

- [Healthcare Supports the NDIS Will Fund](#)
- [Early Childhood Supports the NDIS Will Fund](#)
- [Mental Health Supports the NDIS Will Fund](#)

## Registering to Receive NDIS Funding

If your child has received funding in the past under HCWA or other services, you should already be registered with the NDIA to receive NDIS funding.

If your child is not already registered, you will need to fill in an Access Request Form.

To get an Access Request Form, you must contact the NDIA either by phone on 1800 800 110 or by visiting your local NDIA office.

Visit these resources to learn more about beginning the process of accessing NDIS funds:

- [NDIS Access Requirements](#)
- [NDIS Access Request Form Info](#)
- [Guide to Accessing the NDIS](#)

## Your NDIS Support Plan

Once you've applied for access to the NDIS, it's time to start preparing for your NDIS Support Planning session. **A Support Plan from the NDIA has 2 parts.**

**Part 1** is about what you and your child want to achieve ... your Planner will call this your "goals and aspirations."

**Part 2** of the plan is all about these things:

- Help your child gets from family and friends, sometimes called informal supports.
- The supports that will be funded by the NDIS.
- How funding for your child’s supports will be managed.
- A date for the plan to be reviewed.

NDIS Support Plans have a positive focus.

The NDIS is all about:

- Goals and Aspirations.
- Increasing Independence.
- Being part of the Community and Employment.
- It is not about what your child can’t do.

You’ll be assisted in the process of creating a plan to access NDIS funding by an NDIA Support Planner.

Support Planners come from a variety of backgrounds – from case managers to autism experts, people with a disability and so on.

You won’t know their expertise before you meet with them, so it’s important to prepare a list of what you want and need ahead of time, as your Support Planner may not be familiar with what supports are available.

## **Preparing for Your Support Plan**

The NDIS Planning process is as follows:

1. Think about your child’s needs and goals.
2. Meet with your Support Planner.
3. Develop your child’s plan and manage their supports.
4. Get your child’s plan approved.
5. Review your child’s plan.

You’ll start by identifying your child’s needs and goals before your first planning session.

Ask yourself:

- What support does your child need for everyday activities?
- What does your child want to be able to do in the next 12 months?
- What does your child need to increase their independence?

**Think about supports your child already receives, such as:**

- Living arrangements.

- Skill building programs and therapies.
- Aids, equipment and home modifications.
- Assistance in carrying out daily activities.

**Think about what your child's life is like now:**

- What educational and social activities are they currently involved in?
- What works well for them?
- What would they like to change or improve?
- What would they like to try?
- What do they enjoy?
- What are they good at?
- What is the next step for them to gain more independence?

**Your child's goals might fall into any one of these categories:**

- School
- Education Outside of School
- Social Participation
- Independence
- Improved Living Arrangements
- Health and Wellbeing

**Some example goals include:**

- Maintaining health and fitness.
- Improving communication skills.
- Reducing tantrums and meltdowns.
- Engaging in community activities.
- Making friends.

Be sure to consider things that you may take for granted, such as personal care or transportation support – anything around daily living activities that, without autism, they would be able to do for themselves.

Once you've developed a list of supports you'd like your child to receive, you'll need to provide evidence that your child needs those supports, such as reports and assessments from professionals about your child's "impairments" and their impact on your child's daily life.

If your child is currently receiving any supports covered under the NDIS, go to their current providers and ask for written reports outlining:

- What the provider has been doing over the past 12 months.
- Their current needs.
- Evidence of their eligibility.

- Hours of service they've provided.
- Approximate cost of this service.
- Recommendations for supports needed over the next 12 months.

One or two of these reports will help you show that the supports you're requesting NDIS funding for are needed by your child and why.

If you don't have a current service provider there is no need to worry, you don't need to go start therapy to prove your child needs it.

Whether your child is currently receiving support or not, there are organisations currently assisting people in getting NDIS funding.

They can help you navigate the process and know the language to use and how to tie your support needs to the clusters of funding identified by NDIA.

They can also identify what supports you need and provide the evidence for this in many cases, saving you a lot of time and stress in preparing for the NDIS.

## **Next Steps**

Now that you have a basic understanding of what the NDIS is, how it can help your child with autism, and how to start the process of getting your NDIS funding, it's time to get to work!

If you aren't already registered or aren't sure if you are, start there.

Then begin preparing for your first Planning Session.

In addition to our recommendations above, see the [NDIS Planning Process](#) page to get an additional overview and download the NDIS Getting Plan Ready form.

The [Carers Australia Getting Ready Guide](#) is also a great resource for getting ready.

If you'd like more hands-on, personal assistance with getting ready for the NDIS, let us help you!

We offer a number of pre-planning group sessions, as well as one-on-one assistance to help you navigate the process more easily and ensure you have all the information you need to get the NDIS funding you're entitled to.

To date, we have helped over 120 people transition to the NDIS and receive NDIS funding.

**Contact our team on 1300 856 617 and we can support you every step of the way.**