

‘Having a go’: Exploring the use of supports to make individualised living a reality

This report presents research findings exploring the use of capacity building supports for making individualised living a reality. The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and Scope partnered on this research.

Background

People with disability have the right to live in the community and have choices equal to others. This includes the right to choose where they live and who they live with.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) supports NDIS participants to develop the skills to live how and where they want. This support can be in a participant’s home and can be in a shared or individual arrangement. Family, friends, and other supporters also support NDIS participants to live where and how they want.

For some NDIS participants, learning skills and gaining more knowledge about home and living options may mean that they have a broader range of options available to them. For example, a person may build their capacity in daily living tasks such as making a sandwich or paying their bills.

Together with Scope, we completed a research project and wrote a report called *Having a go: Exploring the use of supports to make individualised living a reality*. This is a summary of the findings from that project. You can find the full report on the research section of [our website \(external\)](#).

Why did we do this research?

In May 2022, we partnered with Scope to research what supports NDIS participants use to build their capacity to work towards their own home and living goals. A panel of five NDIS participants, family and carers supported this research.

We did the research to learn more about:

- The support NDIS participants need to explore home and living options.
- The supports and support practices that assist NDIS participants to learn, practice, and keep skills for home and living options.
- How building the relevant skills and knowledge can contribute to NDIS participants living how and where they want.
- The barriers and enablers for NDIS participants to access the support they need to build daily living skills and knowledge.

How did we do this research?

The Participant Advisory Panel (PAP) worked with us to make sure the research methods, research tools (such as interview questions), and findings were important to NDIS participants.

The research focused on the 5 NDIS participant disability cohorts with the highest use of Supported Independent Living (SIL) funding.

1. Autism
2. Cerebral palsy
3. Down syndrome
4. Intellectual disability
5. Psychosocial disability

We did interviews and focus groups with 31 adult NDIS participants, their family, and carers, and 19 disability service staff. We asked people to tell us how they are building skills and capacity to live where and how they want, what the challenges are, and what support they need.

We did online surveys about the support used to build capacity with:

- 143 NDIS participants (or their family, carers, or other informal supporters)
- 159 formal supporters such as NDIA planners, Local Area Coordinators (LACs) and disability support workers, and service staff.

We looked at NDIS participant data to see if NDIS participants with NDIS funded capacity building support reached their goals (for example, greater independence with daily activities).

Who participated in the research?

- NDIS participants, family and carers
- Disability service staff, NDIS staff and other formal supporters

What data did we use?

- Data from interviews and focus groups (50 participants)
- Survey responses (302 participants)
- NDIS administrative data

What did we find?

We found that NDIS participants wanted to:

- have privacy, and to feel safe and secure at home
- live near family, friends, transport, shopping, supports, and community activities
- have support available when needed
- choose who they live with.

NDIS participants, their family and carers, and disability service staff wanted clear and accessible information about home and living options. They said that having support to look at different options and think about the good and bad things was a key step. Role models showed them different ways of living and what is possible.

Research participants told us that learning skills for daily living can take time. People learn skills from different people and places including:

- family and friends
- paid supporters such as allied health professionals or support workers
- interactions in the community.

Things that helped NDIS participants to learn, practice and keep home and living skills included:

- Having the right support when needed. This means that NDIS participants can gain and regain skills and knowledge.
- Learning daily living skills when young means that NDIS participants could learn skills at their own pace.
- Having a go to try new things or try different home and living options increased NDIS participants' confidence.
- Learning how to manage time and to resolve supported NDIS participants to build confidence and resilience.
- Being supported to take risks if there is something to gain from the experience (e.g., learning to chop vegetables).
- Being supported by friends, family, and paid supporters to participate in daily activities rather than only having things done for them.

What did we learn?

From the research we identified 4 key areas for action that can help participants work towards achieving their home and living goals:

1. Broadening possibilities for NDIS participants to explore options.

- Clear and accessible information about home and living options is needed.
- Start exploring options early and at key life stages.
- Location, safety, privacy, and participant choice and control are important.

2. Enabling NDIS participants to have a go increases confidence and shifts expectations

- Trialling different options helps participants choose.
- Having experiences outside the family home can broaden options.
- Supports to take risks assists participants to learn and grow.

3. Formal and informal supports to build, practice and maintain skills increases the home and living options available to NDIS participants.

- Active support assists participants to learn new skills.
- Clear information and support about capacity-building supports.
- Individualised capacity-building support plans to develop the skills required for people to live the way they want to.

4. Flexible NDIS plans can support participants to build capacity at different stages of life.

- Capacity-building supports change with participants' capacity and interests.
- Flexible plan duration to scale supports up and down as needed.
- Tailored timelines to support participants to build capacity at their own rate.

What will we do with the research findings?

The research will inform the new approach to Home and Living with the goal of supporting capacity building and broadening home and living options for NDIS participants.

Information on home and living and the NDIS is available on [our website \(external\)](#).