# heading pageParticipant Information Pack

# Making connections

# Information about making connections with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Tasmania

**November 2022**

**Introduction**

We are testing a better way to deliver the NDIS.

We’ve spent time talking to participants, our Agency staff, local area coordinators and early childhood partners and the disability community to work out the ways we can improve the experience people have with the Scheme.

Part of this work has been designing and building a new computer system to help us deliver a nationally consistent experience for participants. We are not changing the rules or the way the NDIS works. We’re testing ways to improve how we:

* Help people with disability learn about and connect with community and mainstream services, including the NDIS
* Support people to apply for the NDIS
* Create an NDIS plan
* Support participants to make the most of their NDIS plan.

We have tested our new computer system and the way it works with our staff and local area coordinator and early childhood partners.

Participants have helped us design the system. It’s now time to test it with participants.

We decided to do the test in Tasmania with participants, providers and the wider disability community to make sure our systems and processes work as they should, and we deliver a quality experience for participants.

Testing in Tasmania means we can learn from the experience, collect feedback from participants, providers, staff, partners and the community. We can then make any changes or improvements we need to before we begin using our new computer system in the rest of Australia.

We created this information pack to help you prepare for the NDIS test in Tasmania.

You can see other information packs and learn more about the NDIS test in Tasmania at [www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)/improvements

**Your NDIS journey**

If you live in Tasmania and are not an NDIS participant from November 2022, but are looking to access disability services and supports, you will have a different NDIS journey to other people in Australia.

This pack provides information about how we are testing improvements to help you connect with the community and other government services and supports.

This pack provides you with information about:

* **Community connections**

Other information packs on our website have information about:

* Applying to the NDIS
* Creating your plan
* Your plan
* Check-ins
* Changing your plan

**Improving connections**

We are improving the way we help people with disability and their families, to learn about and access the supports available in their community.

Being involved in your community can improve your wellbeing and keep you connected to the people and places in your area. Being connected to services and supports in your community can help you to do what is important to you.

NDIS local area coordinator and early childhood partners can help all people with disability, including NDIS participants, to find the supports you need to be more independent and do more of the things you enjoy in your local area.

Mainstream and community supports are supports and services that are outside the NDIS and generally available to everyone.

Mainstream supports are the supports from other government funded services, like health, mental health and education.

Community supports are services you can get through community organisations, like peer-to-peer and community-based groups, religious groups, and services from local councils.

We can help you make connections to services and supports in your community even if you are not eligible for the NDIS. NDIS partners support people who:

* Have a disability and are aged 7 to 64 with **community connections.**
* Have a developmental delay or developmental concern and are younger than 6 with **early connections.**
* Have a disability and are younger than 7 with **early connections**.

You can find out more about the kinds of disability, community and mainstream services and supports available to you by visiting [an NDIS partner near you](https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/ndis-each-state).

You can also call our National Contact Centre on 1800 800 110. Our Contact Centre will pass your details onto your local NDIS partner who will work directly with you.

If you are aged 65 or older, we will provide you information on your local aged care services.

**Community connections**

The NDIS is just one service system which assists eligible people with disability. Community connections are all about helping you find the supports you need in your local community.

Community connections are available to people with disability living in Australia regardless of their citizenship or visa status.

The support you get through community connections will be different depending on your needs. Community connections can include things like help to access information, how to access mainstream and community supports, or peer groups, and if you’re eligible, help to apply to the NDIS.

Community connections can help you get the supports you need to do what is important to you. This can include supports to be more independent and do more of the things you enjoy in your local community.

Community connections generally occur over one or two meetings but for some people it may be a regular conversation. There is no limit to the number of times you can contact your NDIS partner. If you get community connections, you may not need long term support funded by the NDIS.

Your NDIS partner can work with you to develop a **Community Connections plan**, if you want one. They will ask you some questions about your living situation, your informal supports, your goals, and whether you already access community and other mainstream services, as well as the kind of supports you are looking for.

Your Community Connections plan is a summary of all the information you discuss with your NDIS partner. It will have information about the community and other mainstream services in your area, and how you can contact them. A Community Connections plan is different to an NDIS plan because it does not include funding to purchase services and supports.

**Early connections**

If you have a concern about your child's development, your first point of contact will usually be your health or education professional. This person may be your family doctor, early childhood educator or child health nurse. Your health professional may also refer you to an NDIS early childhood partner.

Your early childhood partner will gather information to understand if your child has developmental concerns or developmental delay. Some of the ways they do this is through:

* Talking to you
* Asking for information prepared by the professionals who know your child well
* Observing your child in their usual environment
* Using assessment and screening tools to understand your child’s development.

If your early childhood partner determines your child has developmental concerns, they will work with you to develop an **Early Supports plan** describing how best to support and connect your family to:

* Community and mainstream supports
* Practical information about a child’s development
* Other families with similar experiences like peer support networks
* Early supports

**Early supports**

Early supports are delivered by your early childhood partner through individual and group sessions for up to 12 months. They are designed to build capacity in families, carers and children to promote everyday learning. Early supports use a goal focused approach which addresses specific concerns about your child’s development, like sharing strategies with families and carers so they can best support their child to build skills.

**Your experience**

You can talk to us about your experience making connections in Tasmania. Find out how to contact us on our website at [www.ndis.gov.au/contact](http://www.ndis.gov.au/contact)

You can also share your feedback at: [transition.engagement@ndis.gov.au](mailto:transition.engagement@ndis.gov.au)

Your feedback will help us learn more from our test in Tasmania and to make any changes or improvements we need to before we begin using our new computer system in the rest of Australia.

To help improve the process, we may contact you to ask you about your experience.