

Early connections



This fact sheet will explain:

- what early connections are
- how you can ask for early connections
- how early connections can support you and your child.

What are early connections?

The NDIS can support children younger than 9 and their families, even if your child isn't an NDIS participant. If your child has a disability, or you have concerns about your child's development, we can connect you to information and supports to build your skills and capacity. We call this early connections.

If your child is 9 or older, we can provide [community connections](#) instead. Read more about community connections on the NDIS website.

You might want early connections if:

- your child doesn't have a diagnosis and is younger than 6. Children younger than 9 with a disability can also access early connections.

- you want practical information about your child's development
- you want support to find mainstream and community services near you
- you want to connect to families with similar experiences
- you're not sure if you need to apply to the NDIS, or you want support to apply for the NDIS for your child.

Early connections give you quick access to supports that meet your child's needs and support their development. This might mean they need less support in the future.

For more information, you can read [Our Guideline – Early connections](#) or a [early childhood approach](#) on the NDIS website.

How do you get early connections?

If you have concerns about your child's development and think you need early connections, we recommend talking to your GP, child health nurse, health service, or early childhood educator. They can help you decide if early connections are right for you and give you a referral to an early childhood partner.

You can also contact the NDIS or an early childhood partner directly:

- visit the [office location](#) page on the NDIS website
- call us on **1800 800 110**, or
- send us an email at enquiries@ndis.gov.au.

How do early connections work?

Early connections are delivered by our [early childhood partners](#). They have experience and clinical expertise in working with young children with developmental concerns, developmental delay or disability and their families.

Your early childhood partner will work with you to gather information about your child. This could include:

- information from your referral to the early childhood partner
- observations from you and your early childhood partner
- any reports from doctors, therapists or educators
- assessment tools
- information about you and your child's current support networks.

Then, they'll make recommendations about the best types of supports.

Early connections will look different depending on your situation. They could be very short, or continue for several months.

If you need more support, you can contact your early childhood partner again. Depending on your needs, they can provide new early connections or support you to apply to the NDIS. If your child has turned 9, they can refer you to a [local area coordinator](#) to keep supporting you.



Types of early connections

Connections to information relevant to you

We can help you find practical information about your situation. This could include practical advice about typical child development topics, like communication, behaviour and play, or helpful strategies you can include in your daily routine.

Connections to mainstream and community supports

[Mainstream supports](#) are the supports you can get from other government-funded services, like health, education and family support services.

[Community supports](#) are support services available through community organisations, like social groups, non-profit organisations, or supports from local councils.

These are supports that can be used by all Australians, including people with disability.

We can suggest mainstream and community supports near you. We can explain what these supports are responsible for, and what reasonable adjustments you can ask for so they are accessible to you.

Connections to other families for peer support

We can help connect you to families in your community who have similar situations or experiences. This could be one-on-one or in groups.

Peer supports can help you learn from other families' experiences, share practical information and build your support networks.

Early supports

For children younger than 6 with developmental concerns, we might recommend [early supports](#).

Early supports do not give you NDIS funding. They work with [mainstream and community services](#) to meet specific goals, based on your concerns. They are short-term supports – usually 3 to 6 months, up to a maximum of 12 months.

For more information, see [Our Guideline – early supports](#) on the NDIS website.

Support to apply to the NDIS

If your child needs more support than they can get through early connections, you might decide to apply to the NDIS.

We'll help you to understand if your child is likely to be eligible, and work out what information and evidence you'll need to give us when you apply. Find out more about [applying to the NDIS](#) on the NDIS website.

For more information about early connections, visit [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au).



Notes



Fact sheet – Early connections

For more information visit [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)

National Disability Insurance Agency



Website: [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)



Telephone: 1800 800 110



Webchat: [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)

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