

Guide to Reasonable and Necessary (R & N) decisions

Sensory equipment

Case

Maria asks for funding for Lycra bedsheets and a trampoline to help her 4 year old son manage his developmental delay or disability. She mentions he needs help with:

- emotional regulation
- sensory processing
- sleeping
- managing behaviour.

Would we fund this?

No, we would not fund a trampoline as it is standard outdoor play equipment which is not an NDIS support. We may fund sensory equipment that meets the [NDIS funding criteria](#). For example, we may fund sensory equipment if it's for personal care and safety. We may also fund it to help you to do household tasks, or if it is an evidence-based support to help a child achieve better long-term functional outcomes.

Why wouldn't we fund it?

NDIS laws determine what we can and can't fund. Things we can fund are called NDIS supports. You can use the funding in your plan to buy NDIS supports if they are related to your disability and are in-line with your plan.

Many sensory supports such as balls, fidgets, trampolines, and swing sets are everyday household items that are found in many Australian homes. Items that are standard indoor or outdoor play equipment are not NDIS supports.

There isn't enough research or evidence that tells us this type of sensory equipment is effective. In fact, some research shows that this sensory equipment isn't likely to help improve your ability to carry out daily tasks. Some equipment such as trampolines and weighted blankets, may even be harmful for children younger than 6 years old. Research shows there are other better methods.

To decide if a support is an NDIS support for you, we look at the information you give us against the [NDIS funding criteria](#).

What else do we think about?

We think about whether the sensory equipment helps you with your personal care and safety. We also think about whether it helps you to do household tasks or is an evidence-based

support to help a child achieve better long-term functional outcomes. We may look at funding sensory equipment if there's evidence that shows it:

- is related to your disability support needs
- is an evidence-based support
- is value for money compared with other supports
- is effective and beneficial
- is safe and will not cause harm to you or others
- is the most appropriate support for you, or if there are other supports that would achieve the same or a better result.

When you ask for funding for sensory equipment, we need evidence from an allied health professional. This needs to tell us why the equipment is needed to help you with personal care and safety, to do household tasks, or to achieve better long-term outcomes if you are a child.

Case example

Waru is a 4 year old child with autism spectrum disorder. His family would like him to develop how he manages his emotions (emotional regulation). They would also like support to help him sleep and manage his behaviour.

His family has asked for:

- a weighted blanket and Lycra bed sheets to improve Waru's sleep
- a swing set and massage ball to help with his emotional regulation.

To work out if this sensory equipment is an NDIS support, we look at the information Waru's parents give us against the [NDIS funding criteria](#). We think about whether:

- Waru needs the sensory equipment because of his disability support needs
- these supports will help with Waru's personal care and safety, household tasks, or achieve better long-term outcomes for him
- evidence shows the equipment is safe and will not cause Waru harm.

We decide that these items are not NDIS supports for Waru, and we don't fund them. This is because:

- the swing set is standard outdoor play equipment which is not an NDIS support
- Waru already receives NDIS funding for early childhood intervention, with a team that's working together to support him and his family. There isn't evidence that he would need these supports to increase his long-term outcomes
- evidence has shown that weighed blankets may cause harm. We won't provide or fund a support that is likely to cause harm to Waru or be a risk to others

- There's no evidence from research that Lycra bed sheets and a massage ball are likely to be more effective or beneficial for Waru's disability support needs than his current supports.

For more information, look at:

- [Our Guideline - Reasonable and necessary supports](#)
- [Our Guideline - Assistive technology](#)