28 May 2025

What the Group talked about?

Jane, the NDIA Co-Chair from the Children’s Taskforce, introduced Veronica as the Parent Carer Co-Chair of the Group. The role of the Co-Chairs is to ensure everyone has a say and to keep meetings on time and on topic.

Jane provided a recap of the first meeting, including an update that the Agency is currently collecting the topics raised using the ‘carpark technique’ in meetings and using them to plan future meetings.

A glossary of key words to define important concepts discussed was shared and will be regularly updated.

Design Principles

Jane used the feedback from the first meeting to create 9 draft design principles. The group participated in a poll to indicate if they agreed, disagreed, or were unsure about each draft principle, and to highlight any words that stood out to them.

The group felt that certain words could be ambiguous and provided some explanations and considerations for the Agency to consider. A consistent theme in the feedback was to ensure that each principle considers the diverse needs of families and to make sure the pathway is planned to be supportive, transparent and flexible.

A final copy of the principles will be shared with the group. The final version will incorporate feedback from other stakeholders, including the Children’s Expert Advisory Group and NDIA staff.

Revisiting Making Connections, and Applying to the NDIS: Participant Experiences

The group revisited the first two stages of the participant journey: Making connections and Applying to the NDIS.

The group were asked to build upon the experiences shared in meeting #1 including what went well, what did not go well and what we should know for the future.

Key themes shared by the group

*Please note these themes are a snapshot of the discussion, not an exhaustive list

There is a need for better transparency from the NDIA about the status and handling of applications. A traffic light system or roadmap to track application progress would be helpful.

Assessments need to be suitable for the child's age and situation. Some positive experiences include assessments conducted in familiar settings like playgrounds.

It's important to train staff in early childhood settings on NDIS processes to better assist families.

There is often insufficient support and guidance from NDIA or Partners during the initial application process, and there is confusion about the purpose and accountability of Partners and the NDIS call centre.

It's important for parents and carers to have control over their child's application to prevent it from getting lost. Self-advocacy and knowledge significantly impact the outcome.

Create a NDIS Plan and Use a NDIS Plan:

Participant Experiences

The group was given a summary of the themes heard so far from the research findings, focusing on the next two stages of the participant journey: Create an NDIS Plan and Use a NDIS Plan.

The group broke up into smaller groups to hear from each other on what went well, what did not go well and what we should know for the future.

At the end of the activity each group shared back their key themes.

Key themes shared by the group

*Please note these themes are a snapshot of the discussion, not an exhaustive list

It is important to have flexibility in how a planning meeting occurs, previously there was a choice but now it's often over the phone with planners in different states. This reduces the sense of choice and control or understanding of local environment.

Long-term plans for young children can be inappropriate due to rapid developmental changes.

There is a lack of transparency in decision-making processes and the power held by planners.

Planning meetings often feel surface-level. Final plans do not reflect discussions and reports are sometimes not read by NDIS planners.

Discussing children's challenges in front of planners can be difficult for parents and carers.

Families and carers find it frustrating to repeatedly tell their stories and want a more streamlined way to create plans for multiple children.

Pre-funding for assessments and reports would help families afford necessary documentation.

Support for preparing carer impact statements is important.

What were the key actions

Send an updated group agreement to the group

Send out the Meet the Group Booklet

Send out a survey to capture anything missed from the topics of Connect and Apply and Plan and Fund and use this to inform the session plan of meeting #3

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Children’s Pathway Parent and Carer Engagement Group Friday 14 March 2025

Date
28 May 2025

Children’s Pathway Parent and Carer Engagement Group – Meeting #8

Date
1 August 2025

Children’s Pathway Parent and Carer Engagement Group 9 May 2025

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