9 May 2025

Quote from attendee:

I would love the opportunity to have a conversation with the planner and talk positively about my child, not only focusing on the negatives, but still having the funding there and encouraging that positivity to foster and grow.

What we talked about

Topic 1: Design Principles for the New Pathway

NDIA shared an updated version of the design principles for the new pathway that the group had previously contributed to and asked for final feedback.

The design principles are a set of statements or terms that we will be used by NDIA staff to guide the design of the new pathway. Overall, the group responded positively to the updated principles, and appreciated that as much as possible, their previous feedback had been included.

Members also agreed that the principles should be reviewed regularly as the pathway evolves to ensure they remain comprehensive and use appropriate language.

Topic 2: Experiences with Check-ins, Plan Adjustments, and Support Quality

Members split into small groups to share their experiences relating to:

- check ins by Early Childhood Partners or Local Area Coordinators
- adjusting support plans including notifying about situation changes
- quality of the supports

Topic 3: Asking for assistance and understanding early childhood scheme eligibility

Members split into small groups to share their experiences relating to:

- asking for assistance including enquiries and making a complaint (e.g. National Call Centre, NDIS website and/or Early Childhood Partners and Local Area Coordinators)
- understanding early childhood scheme eligibility

What we heard

- NDIA to be clearer and transparent about expectations of both check ins and plan reassessments. Communication must be in Plain English information and available for parents to access. Parents and carers want to know what to expect, who to contact and what documentation to prepare. This would help alleviate unnecessary alarm that plans will be adversely affected**.**
- NDIA Planners should read all available information prior to plan reassessment meetings to have more informed, personalised and effective conversations with parents and carers.
- Parents and carers must often actively manage their children’s NDIS service providers, including checking invoices and fees of services and ensuring regular communication across multiple providers. This can be stressful and can negatively impact themselves and their family. The NDIA should provide more support to help them manage their NDIS service providers.
- Members reflected that sometimes circumstances change and can be urgently needed. There should be a mechanism to clearly communicate this and that provides a rapid response, especially in emergency situations.
- There is a lot of variability in the support received from Early Childhood Providers and Local Area Coordinators when asking for assistance and support.
- The NDIA complaints process needs to be better communicated, and the process should be updated to be more streamlined and effective. Members suggested publishing the complaints process and other FAQs on the website and in welcome packs.
- Many members noted that they were largely unaware of the eligibility reassessments process. They want more proactive communication, expectation setting and transparency for this part of the journey.

What we agreed on

- Design principles will be shared with NDIA staff working on the design of the new pathway to have front of mind in their daily work.
- The NDIA will consider developing an interpretation guide and scenarios to help NDIS staff understand and apply the new pathway design principles consistently.
- The themes from activity 1 and 2 will be used to plan future co-design activities and build a summary of insights to share with key NDIA stakeholders.

Next meeting

The next Children’s Pathway Parent and Carer Engagement Group meeting is on 30 May 2025

Who we met with

Parent and carers with a child in the scheme under the age of 9.

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