12 July 2025

Quote from an attendee:

We want community spaces or family spaces where people can drop in... a space where you don't have to book in, you don't have to wait, you don't have to be on a long wait list to get information.

What we talked about

Topic 1: Connect and Apply

Members were provided with a summary of the current challenges in the ‘Connect’ and ‘Apply’ phases of the children’s pathway for those under 9 years old. The session focused on gathering feedback and ideas to shape an ideal future experience for families seeking support.

In small groups, members discussed what improvements could be made, considering:

- Whether any steps are missing from the current process
- How to make the experience better for parents, carers, and children

Early thinking was shared around Foundational supports and the introduction of Navigator roles.

What we heard

Connect

- Parents and carers want to feel supported from the moment they notice their child might need extra help. They value a personal, kind, and complete approach - ideally from people who understand what they are going through, including those with lived experience.
- Once foundational supports are in place, they should offer clear and easy-to-understand information to help parents and carers learn about their child’s development and find the right services.
- These foundational supports (once they are in place) will be important in guiding families early, offering practical advice and helping them connect with help in their community.
- Parents and carers also need to know what these supports can offer and what is expected of them, so they can feel confident and make informed choices.
- Support may be needed to recognise if a child has additional needs. This includes access to early childhood checks, information about growth steps, and referrals to specialists.

- Once a child is identified as needing extra support, the experience can be stressful - so it’s important that families continue to receive kind, clear, and personalised support throughout the process.

Apply

- Parents and carers want clear, consistent support when applying to the NDIS. They prefer to work with someone they already know and trust - like a key worker or treating doctor or health worker who understands their child’s needs. Ideally, there should be a single point of contact to guide them through the process.
- Transitions between services should be smooth and without disruption. When families move from foundational supports (once they are in place), or from mainstream and community services into the NDIS, therapy and support should continue without any gaps. This is especially important in rural and remote areas, where more workforce support is needed to ensure services are consistently available
- Information sharing should be easy and automatic. Parents and carers don’t want to repeat their story or fill out the same forms again. Once Foundational supports are in place, and consent has been given, the information gathered should be shared directly with the NDIS to make the process smoother.
- Any treating health doctor or specialist reports and their advice should be acknowledged and understood by the NDIA. Parents and carers want confidence that their child’s needs are being properly considered.

What we agreed on

NDIA will compile a summary of insights and share with relevant NDIA staff within the Agency to ensure future planning is informed by the voice of parent and carers.

Next meeting

The next Children’s Pathway Parent and Carer Engagement Group meeting is on 1 August 2025.

Who we met with

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

Related articles

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

Date
1 August 2025

Children’s Pathway Parent and Carer Engagement Group Meeting #5

Date
30 May 2025

Children’s Pathway Parent and Carer Engagement Group Meeting #6

Date
20 June 2025
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