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An overview of NDIS

Tip: What's the difference between the NDIS and NDIA?

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is run by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).

The NDIS is the way we provide funding to eligible people with disability. The NDIA is the organisation and the people who run the NDIS.

What the NDIS does

The NDIS provides funding to eligible people with disability for NDIS supports to help them in their everyday life, build their independence and work towards their individual goals.

We also connect people younger than 65 with disability to supports in their local community. We can do this even if they’re not eligible for the NDIS. This can include things like:

- help to find practical and relevant information
- access to mainstream and community supports and services
- connections to other people for peer support.

Tip: People with disability eligible for the NDIS are called participants.

We call you an applicant when you apply to the NDIS. You become an NDIS participant if you’re eligible for the NDIS.

Who the NDIS is for

People who meet the eligibility requirements

If you meet the age, residence and disability requirements to become an NDIS participant, you'll likely need NDIS supports for life. You'll receive a plan that sets out your NDIS supports.

Learn more about the disability requirements.

People who need early intervention supports

If you meet the age, residence and early intervention requirements to become an NDIS participant, you'll receive a plan that sets out your NDIS supports. You may only need early intervention supports for a short time.

You may meet both the disability and early intervention requirements, and the supports you'll likely benefit from are NDIS supports.

Learn more about the early intervention eligibility requirements.

Young children with developmental delay

Children younger than 6 with developmental delay may be eligible for the NDIS under the early intervention requirements. Early intervention can reduce a child's need for disability support later in life.

Children younger than 6 don't need a disability diagnosis to access the NDIS.

Learn more about the early childhood approach.

> **Tip: Not all impairments meet the requirements.**
>
> You can contact us or speak to an NDIS partner if you're unsure if you meet the disability or early intervention requirements.

How the eligibility requirements work

You need to meet the age and residence requirements to be eligible for the NDIS. You also need to meet the requirements for disability, early intervention or both.

What we consider when we check your eligibility

Your age

You must be younger than 65 when you apply.

Your residence status

You must be an Australian citizen or hold either a permanent residency or Protected Special Category visa. You must also live in Australia.

Your disability and impairment

Your disability must be caused by an impairment that:

- is likely to be permanent
- significantly impacts your daily life and your ability to work or study.

Learn more about the NDIS eligibility requirements.

How participants get NDIS supports

Participants receive an individual plan that describes the kinds of NDIS supports they need and the funding to pay for them.

Participants choose the providers they want to deliver their NDIS supports.

Participants use the funding in their NDIS plan to pay their providers.

> **Tip: What are NDIS supports?**
>
> NDIS supports are the services, items and equipment our rules say can be funded by the NDIS.

What the process is like

Step 1: Make connections

We'll connect you with an NDIS partner when you ask us about disability supports.

You can start this process by calling us on 1800 800 110.

Your NDIS partner will meet with you and talk about all disability supports available. This includes NDIS supports as well as community and mainstream supports and services such as health, mental health and education services.

We'll connect you with a person at the NDIA if you:

- live in a remote or very remote area
- have complex support needs
- are a young person in residential aged care
- are in a hospital or justice setting.

Step 2: Apply to the NDIS

Your my NDIS contact can explain the NDIS eligibility requirements. Your my NDIS contact can be a local area coordinator, an early childhood partner or a person at the NDIA. They can help you apply if you think you might be eligible.

We'll let you know if you're eligible or ask for more information within 90 days. We'll also let you know if you're not eligible.

Step 3: Create your first plan

We create your first plan once you're an NDIS participant. We use the information and evidence you gave us in your application to do this.

Learn more about creating your first plan.

We share your plan with you in a plan conversation meeting. An NDIA planner will talk with you about your situation, your NDIS supports and your goals before they approve your plan.

We must approve your first plan within 56 days after you become a participant.

Step 4: Start using your plan

We'll arrange a plan implementation meeting within 7 days of your plan being approved, if you would like one.

You can begin to buy the NDIS supports in your NDIS plan once your plan has been approved.

Learn more about using your funding.

Step 5: Reassess your plan

We'll work with you when your plan needs to change to make sure it continues to meet your needs.

Tip: Are you an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander looking for disability support?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their families, representatives, health workers and community organisations can use our First Nations Connect phone service.

Call First Nations Connect on 1800 411 640.

To learn more about getting started with the NDIS, download:

- How to start NDIS – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (PDF 6.7MB)
- How to start NDIS – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (DOCX 1MB)
- Easy Read – How to start NDIS – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (PDF 6.6MB)
- Easy Read – How to start NDIS – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (DOCX 1MB)

Who to talk to next

Visit how to apply if you think you're eligible and would like to apply to the NDIS. If you'd like to talk to someone about applying to the NDIS, you can:

Call us

Call us on 1800 800 110.

Use our service hub

Submit an enquiry through our service hub .

Speak to us in person

Talk to your my NDIS contact or visit your local NDIA office in person.

Related information

What are the NDIS eligibility criteria

How to apply

Guide to the early childhood approach

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