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What early intervention is

Early intervention can improve your ability to do everyday tasks by providing you with support as early as possible.

It can reduce the impact your impairment has on your functional capacity. Functional capacity is your ability to do everyday tasks.

We think of an impairment as a significant change to your body's structure or functions, or to how you think and learn. It could be intellectual, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical.

Impairments can also cause psychosocial disability.

Early intervention can also build the skills of your carer. Getting supports early can mean you'll likely need fewer supports in the future.

We'll check your eligibility regularly when we review your plan, and at other times.

You can meet both the disability and early intervention requirements at the same time.

What having early interventions is like

You need to meet requirements to be eligible

This includes age and residence requirements.

You'll have an impairment that's likely to be permanent. This can also be a psychosocial disability caused by an impairment.

Early intervention supports will help you with at least one of the following:

- Improve how you move around, communicate, socialise, learn, look after yourself and organise your life.
- Prevent your functional capacity from getting worse.
- Improve your functional capacity.
- Support your informal supports, which includes building their skills to help you.

Informal supports can be your family or other people in your support network who help you.

The early intervention supports you need will be NDIS supports.

They'll also reduce your need for support in the future.

Early intervention is also for children younger than 6 with developmental delay.

You need to give us evidence from your doctor, specialist or treating professional

This helps us decide if you're eligible. The evidence needs to confirm you have a permanent impairment and that you need early intervention.

We also look at:

- how your impairment might change over time
- how long you've had your impairment
- if there's been a significant change to your impairment
- if your needs are likely to change soon, for example if you're finishing school.

If you have a hearing impairment

You may also be eligible if you're 25 or younger with a hearing impairment.

You'll need to give us evidence you're aged 0 to 25.

You'll also need to give us a specialist audiological assessment that:

- shows you have auditory neuropathy or hearing loss of at least 25 decibels in either ear at 2 or more adjacent frequencies, that's likely to be permanent
- includes electrophysiological testing, where required.

We'll check if you're eligible in the same way we consider all other impairments if you're older than 26 with hearing loss.

If your child is under 6

There are different eligibility requirements for children younger than 6 with developmental delay.

We need evidence that your child is aged under 6 and meets the residence requirements to help us decide if your child is eligible.

We also need evidence from your child’s doctor, specialist or treating professional showing your child has a developmental delay that:

- is due to mental or physical impairments
- substantially reduces your child’s functional capacity compared with other children the same age
- means your child needs specialist services from more than one professional working as a team for longer than 12 months.

Tip: Unsure if you meet the requirements?

Get in touch with your local NDIS partner. They'll help you understand if you might meet the early intervention or disability requirements or both.

If you don’t meet the eligibility requirements for either, they can connect you with supports in your community.

Learn more about how to apply.

Related information

Guide to the early childhood approach

What is an early childhood partner

What is an eligibility reassessment

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