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Participants in the NDIS

The NDIS is part of a broader system supporting people with disability. The NDIS connects people with disability, their families and carers with government services and community activities, and works to build inclusive communities, workplaces and services. The NDIS doesn't replace services elsewhere in government or the community.

Participants develop individual plans which contain funding to help them live an ordinary life and pursue individual goals, such as learning a new skill, increasing independence, enrolling in education, or getting a job.

Participants control their budget – they decide who provides their support, how, where and when.

Participants can choose to:

- self-manage their funds
- have funds managed by a Plan Manager
- have funds managed by the NDIA, or
- have a combination of management types.

Support coordinators

A support coordinator helps participants coordinate and implement supports in their plan and participate more fully in the community.

Support coordinators work with a participant to:

- understand their plan
- connect with supports and services and exercise choice and control
- use their plan to meet their individual needs
- set up supports and services, including helping participants understand service agreements and service bookings

- review their support arrangements and make changes where necessary
- plan in advance for potential crisis situations
- manage their plan and connections with supports and services
- plan and prepare for their plan reassessment.

Participants may receive funding for these supports in their plan, depending on their individual circumstances, such as:

- their disability and functional impacts on the participant's life
- whether they have family, carers or other types of support in their life.

Three levels of support coordination can be included in a participant's plan.

Level 1: Support connection

Support connection helps participants use their NDIS plan effectively.

Support connection helps a participant:

- understand their NDIS plan
- connect with broader systems of supports
- connect with providers.

Level 2: Coordination of supports

Coordination of supports helps a participant design and build their supports.

Coordination of supports focusses on supporting participants to direct their lives, not just their services. This involves working together to understand the funding, what participants expect from services, and how participants want this designed.

Support coordinators also coach participants to build and maintain a network of formal and informal supports.

Level 3: Specialist support coordination

Specialist support coordination helps remove barriers so a participant can access appropriate supports.

Specialist support coordinators can:

- help participants reduce complexity in their support environment, so they can connect with funded supports as well as broader supports

- negotiate support solutions with multiple stakeholders to achieve well-coordinated plan implementation
- help manage crisis points for participants, ensuring participants have access to relevant supports during a crisis.

Local area coordinators

Local area coordinator partners have local knowledge of disability services and their community. They help participants aged seven years and over understand and access the NDIS and make the local community more inclusive.

Early childhood partners

Early childhood partners provide early childhood supports to children younger than seven who have developmental delay or disability, as part of our early childhood approach.

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