

# Applying for the NDIS

Booklet 1 of 3



This booklet covers:

- what the NDIS does and who is involved
- how to apply for the NDIS
- what the NDIS funds.

# How to use this booklet

## Hello and welcome!

This booklet will help you understand the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and how to apply if you think you are eligible.

You can share this booklet with family and friends and bring it to meetings.

This is the **first of three** booklets in the series.



### Booklet 1

#### Applying for the NDIS

- What the NDIS does and who is involved
- Whether you may be eligible to join
- How to apply to join NDIS
- The types of things the NDIS funds



### Booklet 2

#### Creating your NDIS Plan

- Getting ready for your planning conversation
- Creating your NDIS plan
- Receiving your approved NDIS plan



### Booklet 3

#### Using your NDIS plan

- What your plan includes
- How to use your plan
- How to choose and pay for supports and services
- How to prepare for your plan reassessment



These booklets are available in different formats and languages other than English. Visit the [NDIS website](#) or call **1800 800 110** to request a copy.

# What the NDIS does and who is involved

## What is the NDIS?

The NDIS is Australia's national scheme for people with disability.

It puts people with disability at the centre of decision-making, through the principles of reasonable and necessary supports and individual choice and control.

The NDIS also focuses on early intervention where getting early supports can reduce the impact of disability on you or your child.

The NDIS also connects anyone with a disability to services in their community. This includes connections to doctors, community groups, sporting clubs, support groups, libraries and schools, as well as providing information about what support is provided by each state and territory government.

Our [Participant Service Charter](#) can be viewed on the NDIS website.

## What does the NDIS do?

### It provides funding to eligible people with a disability, based on their individual needs

The NDIS provides reasonable and necessary funding to people with a permanent and significant disability so they can access the supports they need to live and enjoy their life. People who join the NDIS are called 'participants'.

The Australian Government made laws about what we can fund under the NDIS. All supports need to meet the criteria in these laws before we can fund them in your plan. We call these the NDIS funding criteria.

To meet the NDIS funding criteria, a support must meet the NDIS [reasonable and necessary criteria](#). There are also some [types of supports that the law says we can't fund](#).

You can find more information about the NDIS funding criteria in [Our Guideline: Reasonable and necessary](#).

If you become a NDIS participant, we create your plan based on your disability support needs. Your NDIS plan sets out your goals and the supports that will help you pursue those goals.

You decide what your goals are. They might include things like spending time with family and friends, learning new skills, living independently, accessing your local community, getting a job or volunteering.

Supports are the things we provide or fund to help you meet your disability support needs. NDIS supports are the services, items and equipment we can fund or provide under the NDIS.

You can spend your NDIS funding on the supports set out in your plan. You choose the support you receive, when you receive it and who provides it. A nominee or third-party decision maker who has been appointed by you or a court to act on your behalf can help you do this.

### It supports communities to include all Australians with disability

The other role the NDIS plays is to connect all people with disability, including those who are not eligible for the NDIS to community and other government services. This means you, your family and carers can get support to connect with mainstream supports from other government services, and community supports. This might be all the support you need.

# Who is helping deliver the NDIS?

## The National Disability Insurance Agency

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is the independent government organisation that runs the NDIS.

We make the decision about whether you are eligible to become a NDIS participant and, if so, how much funding you receive.

We make these decisions based on the laws for the NDIS which sets out:

- who is eligible for the NDIS
- what supports and services are considered reasonable and necessary for the NDIS to fund.

## Partners in the community

Partners in the community are community-based organisations working with us to help deliver the NDIS.

If you are between the ages of 7 and 64, you will work with a local area coordinator.

If you are younger than 7 years of age and have a developmental delay or disability, you will work with an early childhood partner.

## Local area coordinators

[Local area coordinators](#) work with all people with disability, not just NDIS participants. They can:

- help all people with disability to connect with supports, activities in their community and other government services to meet their needs
- share information about the NDIS and help people access the NDIS if needed.
- work with NDIS participants to help them use their NDIS plan
- work in local communities to help them become more accessible and inclusive for all people with disability.

For most people, if you're 7 or older, a local area coordinator will be your main point of contact for the NDIS.

## Early childhood partners

[Early childhood partners](#) are specialist local organisations who deliver our early childhood approach on behalf of the NDIS. They have experience and clinical expertise in working with young children with development delay or disability, and their families.

Early childhood partners also help families connect with other appropriate supports such as community health services, playgroups and educational settings.



## How do I find my local area coordinator or early childhood partner?

Visit the [office location](#) page on the NDIS website to search for offices in your area, or call us on **1800 800 110**.

## What about areas that don't have an early childhood partner or local area coordinator?

Don't worry if there is no local area coordinator or early childhood partner where you live. [Contact us](#) directly and we'll help you to decide whether you'd like to apply for the NDIS.

## How we will work with you

Our [Participant Service Charter](#) sets out what you can expect from us and our partners in the community. It also tells you how you can contact us, make a complaint or provide feedback, and what your rights are if you don't agree with a decision we've made.

Our commitment to you is based on five principles. Your experience with us will be:



### Transparent

We will make it easy for you to access and understand our information and decisions.



### Responsive

We will respond to your individual needs and circumstances.



### Respectful

We will recognise your individual experience and acknowledge you are an expert in your own life.



### Empowering

We will make it easy for you to access information and be supported by the NDIS to lead your life.



### Connected

We will support you to access the services and supports you need.



To make sure we live up to these principles, we measure them every three months in the [Participant Satisfaction Survey](#). If at any time you feel these standards are not being met, please let us know.

# Are you eligible for the NDIS?

If you want to become a NDIS participant and get supports through a NDIS plan, you'll need to apply to the NDIS. There are some requirements you need to meet to be eligible for the NDIS.

To find out if you might be eligible for the NDIS, complete the checklist below.

Question	Your answer
<p><b>1. Are you younger than 65?</b></p> <p>To be eligible for the NDIS, you must be younger than 65 on the day you apply.</p>	<p><b>Yes</b>, go to Question 2.</p> <p><b>No</b>, you will not be able to access the NDIS. You may be able to access other aged care supports. Visit <a href="http://myagedcare.gov.au">myagedcare.gov.au</a>.</p>
<p><b>2. Do you meet the residency requirements?</b></p> <p>To access the NDIS you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• live in Australia</li> <li>• be an Australian citizen or permanent resident, or</li> <li>• hold a permanent visa, or</li> <li>• hold a protected special category visa.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Yes</b>, go to Question 3.</p> <p><b>No</b>, you will not be able to access the NDIS. We may be able to help you connect to community or other government services. Call us on <b>1800 800 110</b>.</p>
<p><b>3. Do you meet the disability requirements?</b></p> <p>You will need evidence of all the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your disability is caused by an impairment</li> <li>• Your impairment is likely to be permanent</li> <li>• Your permanent impairment substantially reduces your functional capacity</li> <li>• Your permanent impairment affects your ability to work, study or take part in social life</li> <li>• You'll likely need support from the NDIS for your whole life.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Yes</b>, you may be eligible. We can support you to make a decision about whether to apply for the NDIS when you contact us.</p> <p>We can also refer you to community or other government services and supports. See the diagram on the next page for more information.</p> <p><b>No</b>, go to Question 4.</p>

Continue on the next page →

## Question

## Your answer

**4. Do you use special equipment because of a permanent and significant disability?**

This may include:

- special equipment (assistive technology).
- modifications to your home.

**Yes**, you may be eligible. Find out [how to apply](#) on page 6, or on the NDIS website.

**No**, go to Question 5.

**5. Do you need some supports now to reduce your future needs?**

You may be eligible for the NDIS under the early intervention requirements. You will need to meet all the following:

- have an impairment that is likely to be permanent
- early intervention supports will help you need less disability support in future
- the early intervention you need is most appropriately funded by us

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

You may meet the early intervention requirements if you are aged between 0 and 25 with a hearing impairment.

**Yes**, you may be eligible. Find out [how to apply](#) on page 6, or on the NDIS website.

**No**, you will not be able to access the NDIS.

We may be able to help you connect to community or other government services. Call us on **1800 800 110**.

**If you think you might be eligible, we can help you apply to the NDIS. We'll look at all the information you give us to decide if you're eligible. You can call us on 1800 800 110.**



# Applying for the NDIS

## How do I apply for the NDIS?

Applying to the NDIS is how you let us know you want to become a NDIS participant.

If you're aged 7 and older, there are a few ways you can apply:

- Your local area coordinator or local NDIS office can help you apply. They can help you through the application process and be your point of contact. Visit the [office location](#) page on the NDIS website.
- You can apply over the phone on **1800 800 110**.
- You can complete an [NDIS application form](#).

For children younger than 7, we encourage you to talk to an early childhood partner before applying to the NDIS. They can provide supports to children before they apply, and let you know if the NDIS is right for your child.

## What do I need to provide when I apply?

You will need to:

- give us the information and any documents we need to verify your identity. Learn more about [proof of identity](#) and how we protect your [privacy](#) on the NDIS website.
- give us the information and any documents we need to decide if you're eligible. These are outlined in [Our Guideline: Applying to the NDIS](#).
- sign or certify the NDIS application

If you're not able to make decisions, even with support, we'll explore who else can help you make decisions and do things on your behalf. We call this representative decision-making, and we call this person a nominee.

## Who can provide evidence of my impairments?

We need evidence of your impairments, to help us work out if you're eligible. To provide this, ask your [treating professional](#) to complete section 2 of the [NDIS application form](#).

For children younger than 6 with developmental delay, an early childhood partner can provide evidence of developmental delay.

Your treating professional might be your doctor, specialist, or allied health service provider.

You should use a professional who:

- has worked with you for a long time, usually for at least 6 months
- is the [most appropriate type of professional](#) to give evidence about your impairment
- is qualified and registered in their area of practice with the [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency](#) or relevant professional authority.

If your treating professional does not meet these requirements, we may not be able to verify the information in your request to access the NDIS and may need to ask you for further information.



## Apply for the NDIS



### Step 1. Contact us

Speak with us about your eligibility and how we can help you apply.



### Step 2. Apply

Submit your application, including your supporting evidence.



### Step 3. Receive outcome

We'll send you our decision within 21 days.

- If you are **eligible**, you will move to the next stage, creating your NDIS plan.
- If you are **not eligible**, we will connect you with other government or community services.

## What if I need help to apply?



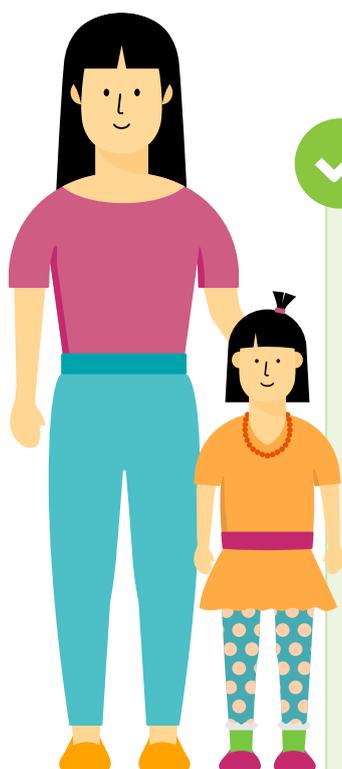
Other people can help you apply if you want them to. For example, you could ask for help from a family member, a friend, a carer or a support worker.

With your permission, we can share information with these people during your application. For example, they could call us to check how your application is progressing. You can let us know on your application form, or you can tell us in person or over the phone.

If someone else has legal authority to make decisions for you, they can apply to the NDIS on your behalf. If you're younger than 18, the people with parental responsibility for you will apply for you. This is often your parents or legal guardian.

## Examples

These examples show how individuals might be supported by the NDIS.



### Harriet

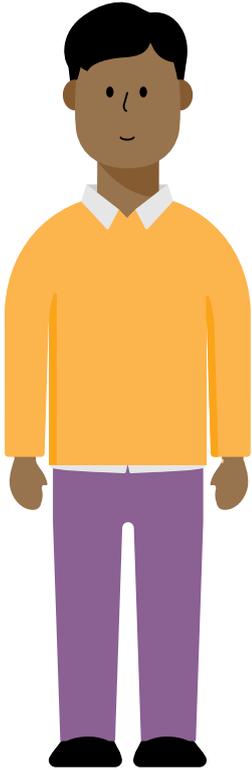
Janine is concerned about the development of her 4-year-old daughter Harriet. Janine uses the NDIS website to learn about the early childhood approach for children younger than 7, and she thinks Harriet might benefit.

Janine calls the NDIA to find out where to get help. We direct Janine to her local early childhood partner. They set up a meeting. In the meeting the early childhood partner identifies that Harriet does not need to become a NDIS participant with a NDIS plan, but would benefit from some early intervention support. The early childhood partner supports Janine with speech therapy strategies to use at home and at kindergarten to improve the development of Harriet's communication skills. Funding for these early connections supports is covered by the NDIS.

The early childhood partner also provides some therapy strategies the family can use at home to support Harriet's independence. After three months, Harriet's speech and overall development has improved. The family feel confident to continue to support her progress without needing more early intervention supports. Harriet is ready to start primary school the next year.

The early childhood partner works with Janine to set up strategies to help her make sure Harriet continues to make progress. They agree how Janine will get back in touch if she has anything she'd like to discuss about Harriet's development in the future.





## Dom

Dom, 24, has a moderate intellectual disability. He lives with his parents and needs their help for things like cooking meals and transport. They accompany him when he goes out. He would like to be more independent and get a part-time job one day.

Dom has never received disability support from his state government. His dad calls the NDIA and asks about access to the NDIS. Before we can make a decision about eligibility, we ask him to provide additional evidence about Dom's disability.

Dom's dad sends us this further evidence. After receiving this evidence, we decide he is eligible for the NDIS. We start working with Dom to create his plan, based on his disability support needs. Dom is put in touch with a local area coordinator in his area. He uses his NDIS funding to buy supports to learn new things like cooking for himself, getting ready each morning, and building his skills and confidence so he can catch the bus by himself. In the longer-term, Dom hopes to use his NDIS funding to help him get the right skills to get a part-time job in hospitality.



## Jim



Jim, 45, has an accident at home and sustains multiple injuries to his left leg. He is admitted to hospital, has various surgeries and needs medication to manage his pain.

For the first few weeks after leaving hospital, Jim needs help changing the dressings on his wounds. He also starts an intensive rehabilitation program.

The state health system is responsible for funding Jim's hospital care, surgeries, specialists, nurses and rehabilitation. After reading about NDIS requirements, Jim identifies that he isn't eligible as his injuries are not likely to be permanent.

Jim knows that if his needs change down the track he might become eligible for the NDIS. For example, he may be eligible for the NDIS if, after he finishes all his treatment, there is evidence that he has a permanent and significant disability, and he needs help with day-to-day activities.

# What the NDIS funds

## What can the NDIS fund?

We can fund supports you need for your disability if they meet certain criteria. These are called ‘reasonable and necessary supports’. For example, supports need to be related to your disability, value for money, effective and beneficial, and most appropriately funded or provided by us.

When we make a reasonable and necessary decision, it is based on many different things; including what your disability support needs are, your living arrangements and what is reasonable for informal supports, like families and carers to provide – everyone is different.

The [Would we fund it](#) guide includes examples of commonly requested items that we find cause the most confusion. For each item, we explain how we make reasonable and necessary decisions about them and provide an overview of whether we typically fund them.



## How does the NDIS support families and carers?

We know families and carers provide help and support that could otherwise be provided by formal services or paid support workers. They can be one of the greatest advocates for people with disabilities, providing practical and emotional support.

In addition to the [government-funded programs available to support carers](#), you might use funding in your plan to give your carers a break. This might mean:

- joining a new community group
- having a short stay out of home to try new things, make new friends or develop new skills
- temporary periods of extra personal supports so you can remain at home when your family and/or carers are not available
- support to participate in community activities, resulting in a break for carers.

## Is the NDIS linked to the Disability Support Pension?

No. The Disability Support Pension (DSP) is separate to the NDIS. If you are receiving the DSP, this does not mean you are automatically eligible for the NDIS. You will still need to check your eligibility and apply for the NDIS.

Similarly, if you receive NDIS funding, it will not impact any income support you receive, such as the DSP or Carer Allowance.

## I am receiving compensation payments. Will this affect my eligibility for the NDIS?

No. Compensation for a personal injury will not affect your eligibility for the NDIS.

But the person who pays your compensation might need to pay some money to the NDIS.

They will do this if the NDIS has paid for supports or services which your compensation should have paid for. The amount of money they pay to the NDIS is called a recoverable amount. There is more information about [compensation](#) on the NDIS website.

## Does the NDIS replace other government and community services?

No. There are many supports you can get outside the NDIS. Other government and community services provide supports to all Australians, including people with disability. The NDIS operates alongside these services to improve the lives of people with disability.

[The Disability Gateway](#) has information and services to help all people with disability, their families and carers to locate and access services across Australia.

Your local area coordinator or early childhood partner can also connect you with services and supports in your area.

Other government services include local councils, hospitals, libraries, health centres, public transport or schools. Community services and activities could include community groups, sporting clubs and charities within your local community.

“**I’ve been able to go to the beach with the kids for the first time in 11 years, it’s little things like that are giving us experiences to live a normal life.’**

Matthew, NDIS participant



# What are other government services responsible for?

Other government services continue to be provided to all Australians with disability. To help you understand who is responsible for different services, the following pages list some examples. For more information, please read [Our Guideline: Mainstream and community supports](#).

## Education

### What are we responsible for?

We're responsible for supports for everyday activities that you need because of the functional impact of your disability, and aren't related to learning. This includes:

- personal care and support at school – learn more in [Our Guideline: Work and study supports](#)
- transport to and from school – learn more in [Our Guideline: Work and study supports](#)
- specialist support you need to transition to higher education, training or work because of your disability.

Remember, if we're responsible for funding the support, it must also meet all the other [NDIS funding criteria](#) before we can include it in your plan.



### What is the school education system responsible for?

The school education system is responsible for supports where the main purpose is to help you learn, study and achieve education outcomes. This includes:

- adjusting teaching methods
- providing learning assistance and aids
- modifying the school building
- providing transport between school activities, such as to excursions and sporting carnivals.



# Health



## What are we responsible for?

We're responsible for supports that help you go about your daily life, and are related to your disability-related impairments that impact your functional capacity. We fund supports that are related to things you can and can't do, due to your disability, which you need on an ongoing or regular basis.

This includes maintenance supports, given or supervised by qualified healthcare staff. These are ongoing supports that help you keep your body's functions and abilities. This could include long term therapy or support, to improve your abilities over time or stop things from getting worse.

We're responsible for these maintenance supports if:

- the support is directly related to your disability-related impairments that impact your functional capacity – the things you can and can't do because of your disability
- you also need the support so you can continue to live in the community, study or work.

Remember, if we're responsible for funding the support, it must also meet all the other [NDIS funding criteria](#) before we can include it in your plan.

## What is the health system responsible for?

- Treating and diagnosing health conditions, including ongoing or [chronic health conditions](#)
- Medical services like general practitioners, medical specialist services, dental care and nursing
- Allied health services, such as physiotherapy and optometry, to improve the health of all Australians
- Acute and post-acute services – hospital services for illness and injury, and follow-up care such as rehabilitation
- Preventive health – help to stop you getting sick in the future, such as help for weight loss, or to reduce your smoking, drinking or drug use
- Care in public and private hospitals
- Medicines, pharmaceuticals and aids such as crutches
- Other services that all Australians are entitled to, that aim to improve your health status
- Services and therapies to help you pursue a goal or outcome over a set period of time, where the main purpose is treatment directly related to your health
- Short-term services and therapies after a recent surgery or medical event, to help you pursue a goal or outcome over a set period of time, and improve what you're able to do – for example rehabilitation and follow-up care
- Palliative care – such as end of life care
- Clinical or medical supports for young children, including acute care in a hospital setting, and outpatient and continuing care where the child doesn't stay in hospital
- Newborn follow-up, such as child and maternal health services

# Employment



## What are we responsible for?

- Supports you need for your daily life whether you're working, looking for work or not looking for work
- Personal care and support in the workplace, such as help to go to the toilet, eat and drink while you're at work
- [Transport support](#) to and from work, if you can't use public transport without great difficulty due to your disability
- Supports you need on a regular and ongoing basis to help you find and keep a job – we may fund these supports if you're able to work, but are unlikely to find or keep a job, even with an employment service
- Support to transition to work, when you need extra support because of your disability, compared to other Australians – this includes training about workplace relationships, communication skills, wearing the right clothes, getting to work on time, and travelling to and from work.

Remember, if we're responsible for funding the support, it must also meet all other [NDIS funding criteria](#) before we can include it in your plan.



## What is the employment system responsible for?

The employment system is responsible for employment services and programs. This includes general employment services for all Australians, and disability-specific employment services such as [Disability Employment Services](#).

For example, employment services provide advice and support for people with disability to prepare for, find and maintain jobs.

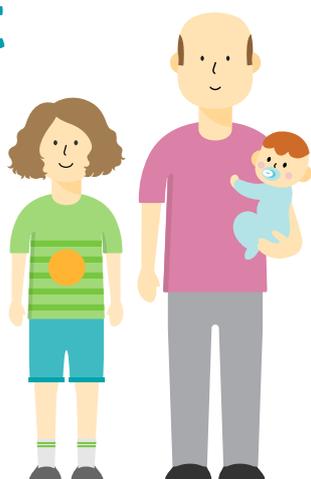
The employment system also helps employers hire and include people with disability in the workplace. This includes:

- support, training and resources
- funding assistance to make [reasonable adjustments](#), such as workplace equipment through the [Employment Assistance Fund](#)
- incentives to hire people with a disability, such as wage subsidies.

Employers are responsible for work-specific support related to your recruitment, your job arrangements, and your workplace environment. This includes:

- training and induction when you start a new job
- workplace modifications and workplace equipment that allows you to do your job, including those that can be funded by the [Employment Assistance Fund](#)
- transport within work activities
- workplace support to follow disability discrimination laws, such as reasonable adjustments.

# Family support



## What are we responsible for when it comes to children who are in out-of-home care?

For children in out-of-home care, we're responsible for supports that are specific to the child's developmental delay or disability. This means we're responsible for the extra supports children need because of their developmental delay or disability, compared to other children of a similar age and in similar out-of-home care arrangements.

Out-of-home care arrangements are different across Australia. So the reasonable and necessary supports we fund in out-of-home care arrangements will reflect each child's individual needs and situation.

Governments across Australia agree on who funds different supports for children in out-of-home care arrangements. You can find more information about these Disability Reform Ministers' Meetings agreements on the [Department of Social Services website](#).

Remember, if we're responsible for funding the support, it must also meet all the other [NDIS funding criteria](#) before we can include it in your plan.

## What are we responsible for when it comes to children who aren't in out-of-home care?

We're responsible for supports that families need as a direct result of a child's developmental delay or disability, and that help families and carers sustainably maintain their caring role. These may include supports such as:

- [social and recreation support](#)
- therapy and behaviour supports
- [short breaks or respite](#)
- [assistive technology](#)

Remember, if we're responsible for funding the support, it must also meet all the other [NDIS funding criteria](#) before we can include it in your plan.

## What are the child protection and family support systems responsible for?

- Statutory child protection services for families who have entered, or are at risk of entering, the child protection system
- General parenting programs, counselling or other supports for families at risk of entering the child protection system, and to the broader community – this includes adjusting these programs to make them suitable for families with disability
- For children in out-of-home care, supports that other children at a similar age and in similar out-of-home care arrangements need, including respite and other support for carers.

Remember, if we're responsible for funding the support, it must also meet all the other [NDIS funding criteria](#) before we can include it in your plan.

## What happens next?

- After you apply, we look at the eligibility requirements to see if we have enough evidence to make a decision.
- If we don't have enough evidence, we'll contact you and ask for more information.
- Once we make our decision, we'll send you a letter within 21 days to tell you whether you are eligible, how we made the decision, and any next steps.
- If you are eligible for the NDIS, we will contact you to arrange a planning conversation to discuss your disability support needs in detail.
- If you are not eligible, we will explain why. You can still get information and help from a local area coordinator or early childhood partner to access supports and services in your community.
- If you don't agree with our decision, you have the right to ask us for an internal review. You have 3 months to ask for an internal review. This is 3 months from the day after you receive our decision in writing.
- Your local area coordinator, early childhood partner or the NDIA can let you know how to do this and put you in touch with someone, such as an advocate, who can help you with this process.
- Following our internal review, if you are still not satisfied with our decision you can request it be reviewed by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). You can only ask the AAT to review a decision after there has been an internal review by the NDIA.
- Remember, there are many disability-related supports you can get outside the NDIS. Visit the [Disability Gateway](#) for more information.
- You can reapply for the NDIS at any time:
  - if you have new evidence about how your disability impacts your everyday life, or
  - if your situation changes in the future.

You are now ready to move to Booklet 2  
**Creating your NDIS Plan**

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# Notes





### National Disability Insurance Agency



Telephone 1800 800 110



Webchat [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)

### Follow us on our social channels



### For people who need help with English



TIS: 131 450

### For people who are deaf or hard of hearing



TTY: 1800 555 677



Speak and Listen: 1800 555 727

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