



# Supporting children with autism

We want to know what you think

Easy Read paper

March 2021



**ndis**

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

## How to use this paper



The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) wrote this paper. When you see the word 'we', it means the NDIA.



This paper is written in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**

We have written some words in **bold**.

Not bold

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 49.



This Easy Read paper is a summary of another paper.



You can find the other paper on our website at [www.ndis.gov.au/community/have-your-say](http://www.ndis.gov.au/community/have-your-say)



You can ask for help to read this paper.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

## What's in this paper?

What is this paper about?	4
What is early intervention?	9
Why did we write this paper?	11
How does this research affect the NDIS?	14
Supporting children with autism	18
Changes to funding	27
Making a plan	31
How to tell us what you think	35
Questions for you to think about	36
Other ways the NDIS will change	46
More information	47
Word list	49

## What is this paper about?



We want to make the NDIS easier to use.

We also want to make sure it is:



- fair



- **consistent.**



When something is consistent, it is done the same way every time.

As part of this, we want to provide better information for:



- children with **autism**



- their families



- other people who may help look after them.

Autism is a disability that might affect how well you can:



- think
- feel
- communicate
- connect and deal with others.



This paper talks about what we need to think about when we support children with autism.



This includes the ways we work out funding.



But before we change anything, we want you to have your say.

We want to hear from:



- families of children with autism



- carers



- disability organisations



- people who work with children with autism.

In this paper, we:



- tell you what we want to change



- ask you questions



- explain how you can tell us what you think.

## What is early intervention?



We think that it's better if children with autism can get services and support as early as possible in their lives.



We call this **early intervention**.

## Why is early intervention important?

It's important for children with autism to get support:



- as early as possible



- when they are growing and developing.

Early intervention helps them:



- learn new skills



- take part in family and day-to-day life



- be **independent** when they are older.



When you are independent, you can do things for yourself.

## Why did we write this paper?



We want to find better ways to explain funding for children with autism.

We also want to make our decisions about funding for children with autism:



- consistent



- fair



- clear



- easier to understand.



Autism CRC is an organisation that does research on autism all around Australia.



Autism CRC did a large research project about supporting children with autism.



They wrote a report about their research.



This report helped us to understand the best ways to support children with autism.

They found that:



- there isn't one way that works for all children with autism



- lots of professional support does not always work best for children with autism



- it's important for the family to be part of the support children with autism get.

We will use what we learned from the report to help us find better ways to:



- support children with autism



- make decisions about funding for children with autism



- help you understand early intervention for children with autism.

## How does this research affect the NDIS?



There are many different supports for children with autism.

But learning about these supports can sometimes be difficult for:



- families



- carers



- health care workers and teachers.

We will use the research to improve the way we:



- support young children and their families



- explain how we make decisions about NDIS funding.

We will also use the research to make information about NDIS funding for children with autism:



- clearer



- easier to understand.

The research told us that supports for your child and family should be based on:



- a good understanding of autism



- good research about autism.



The research told us that supports for your child should be delivered by professional health workers, such as a doctor or therapist.

Understanding the research will help make sure supports for your child:



- meet their needs



- help them take part in the community



- keep them safe



- are good value for money.



The research also told us that it is better if the people who support your child:

- know your child
- respect your child's feelings.

This will help us make the NDIS:



- fair



- consistent



- easier to use.

## Supporting children with autism



Some children with autism might take part in the NDIS.



But other children with autism can get the support they need without taking part in the NDIS.

If a child with autism takes part in the NDIS, we will:



- learn what the child's strengths are



- work out what supports they need from family, the community and the NDIS



- decide how much funding we give them.



A child's supports are based on their **functional capacity**.

Your functional capacity is:



- your ability to do something
- the skills you have and how you use them
- how you manage everyday life.

We sometimes call it your capacity.



Functional capacity is a key part of working out if someone can take part in the NDIS.



But we also need to think about 3 other things when we decide how much NDIS funding to give children with autism.

## 1. Holistic planning



When we use **holistic planning**, we think about all the supports your child could use.

These supports could come from:



- family and friends



- health services



- early education



- community organisations,  
such as libraries



- state and territory governments

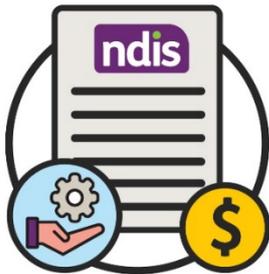


- the NDIS.

Holistic planning also helps you understand:



- your child's goals



- what supports are funded by the NDIS



- what supports aren't funded by the NDIS, like early childhood services.

In holistic planning we will work with you and your child to understand:



- how your child's disability affects them and your family



- how you might be able to use funding from the NDIS



- how you might be able to use other supports in the community.



Holistic planning will also work out how everyone will support your child.

This includes:



- your family



- therapists, such as a speech pathologist or occupational therapist



- teachers



- carers.

## 2. When your child becomes more independent



We want to support children with autism early in their life so they can be independent in the future.



This means they might not need support from the NDIS when they are an adult.

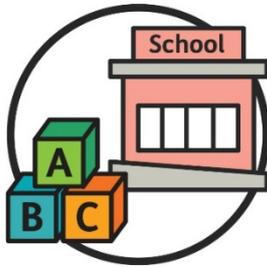


When we decide how much funding to give your child, we will focus on what supports your child needs right now.

Your child will need less supports as they become more independent, such as when they:



- learn new skills



- start school



- take part in the community.



Over time your family can also learn new ways of supporting your child.

### 3. Changes in your child's life

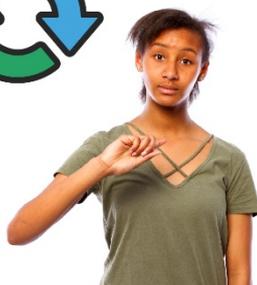
A child with autism might need more support when they:



- move from early childhood learning to primary school



- move from primary school to high school.



We want to make sure we support children with autism when their life changes in a big way.



When your child starts school they will also get support to learn when they are at school.

## Changes to funding



We are making how we make decisions about funding for children with autism clearer.

We want to use different levels of funding for children with autism that think about your child's:



- capacity



- age



- needs.

When we think about what type of funding we will give a child, we think about how they:



- communicate
- move around
- learn
- interact with other children.



When a child starts school, their funding changes.



This is because they will get support to learn when they are at school.



These levels of funding can also be used in a way that suits the child and family.

## What if a child can't receive funding?



Sometimes we might not give funding for certain types of supports.

This will happen if:



- a child gets the same supports from more than 1 provider



- the family and provider have different goals for the child



- a child can get the support from other places, such as at school.

This could also happen if we think early intervention will not help the:



- child or family learn new skills



- child take part in the community.

## Making a plan



An **NDIS plan** is a document that includes information about:



- you and your child's goals



- what supports you need



- the NDIS funding you will receive.

When we make a plan for your child, we need information from:



- your child



- family and carers



- providers.



This information will help us understand:

- how much support your child needs
- how often your child uses their supports.



But we will find out more about other supports around your child if:



- this is the first time they are using supports

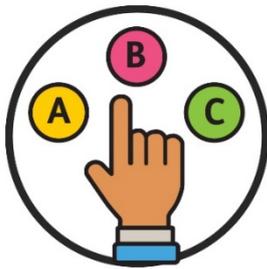


- you just found out they have autism.

When we make a plan for a child with autism, we will help families:



- learn about different supports for their child



- understand how to pick a provider that's right for their child



- understand how much supports cost.



Before we approve your child's plan, we will give you a copy of it.



This gives you a chance to make sure the plan is right for your child before it starts.



Once we have made the plan, we will meet with you again.

At that meeting, we will talk to you about:



- how you want to use your child's plan



- how you want to manage your child's plan



- how often your child will receive funding.

## How to tell us what you think



We want to know what you think about what we are improving.



You can tell us what you think by answering the questions on the following pages.



Or you can tell us what you think on **our website.**



Please tell us what you think by 10 am, Friday 14 May 2021.

## Questions for you to think about



We want to know what you think about how we are providing better information about supporting children with autism.

You can answer:



- all of the questions



- some of the questions.



Where would you get information about choosing supports and services for children with autism?

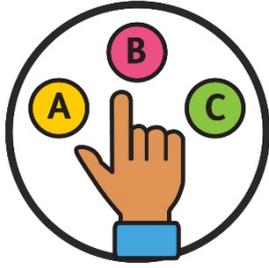
For example:



- the NDIS website
- the person you usually talk to at the NDIS
- a professional or therapist you currently use
- family and friends.

**You can write your answer here:**





Where else should you be able to get information about choosing supports and services for children with autism?

**You can write your answer here:**

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Holistic planning thinks about all the supports that are available to your child.



How can we help families find and use other supports outside of the NDIS?

**You can write your answer here:**

A circular icon containing a document with horizontal lines and a pencil pointing to a small square box on the page.



We share some important ideas from the Autism CRC research on pages 16–17 of this paper.



Do you agree with these ideas?



Do you have any other ideas to share with us?

**You can write your answer here:**

A large, empty rectangular box with a purple border, intended for writing answers. In the top right corner of the box, there is a circular icon containing a pencil and a sheet of paper with lines, representing writing or a document.



Is it helpful to hear stories about how parts of the NDIS work?



Is it helpful to hear stories that explain the words we use?

**You can write your answer here:**



Do you have any other ideas about how we should explain:

- how parts of the NDIS work?
- the words we use?

**You can write your answer here:**

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Is the way we use different levels of funding for children with autism clear?

We talk about the different levels of funding on pages 28–29 of this paper.

**You can write your answer here:**

An icon in the top right corner of the writing box showing a document with horizontal lines and a yellow pencil with a red eraser, indicating a writing area.

Are there other ways we could explain how we work out funding for children with autism?

What are they?

**You can write your answer here:**

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Some families or carers might need more support from the NDIS, for example if it is the child's first plan.



What is the best way to support them?

**You can write your answer here:**

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin purple border, intended for writing an answer. In the top right corner of this box, there is a small circular icon containing a document with a pencil, symbolizing writing or editing.



We want to support families of children with autism to decide what supports they use.



How could we provide clear information about the choices they have?

**You can write your answer here:**



How else could we help families decide what supports they want to use?

**You can write your answer here:**



It can be hard for some families to understand what different providers tell them about what their child needs.



How can we better support families to get the information they need to make choices for their child?

**You can write your answer here:**

## Other ways the NDIS will change



We want to change how other parts of the NDIS work as well.



We wrote Easy Read papers about other things we want to change.



You can find more information about independent assessments on **our website**.



You can find information about changing early intervention for young children on **our website**.



You can find information about changing NDIS plans and funding on **our website**.

## More information

For more information about this paper,  
please contact us.



[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)



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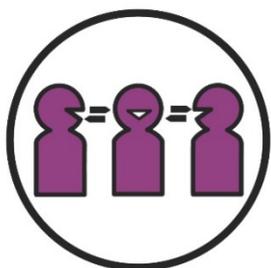
## Support to talk to us



You can use our webchat feature to talk to us online.

[www.ndis.gov.au/webchat/start](http://www.ndis.gov.au/webchat/start)

If you speak a language other than English, you can call:



Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)

**131 450**

If you have a speech or hearing impairment, you can call:



TTY

**1800 555 677**



Speak and Listen

**1800 555 727**



National Relay Service

**133 677**

[www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)

## Word list

### Autism

Autism is a disability that might affect how well you can:



- think
- feel
- communicate
- connect and deal with others.



### Consistent

When something is consistent, it is done the same way every time.

### Early intervention

We think that it's better if children with autism can get services and support as early as possible in their lives.



We call this early intervention.

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Your functional capacity is:

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## **Holistic planning**

When we use holistic planning, we think about all the supports your child could use.



## **Independent**

When you are independent, you can do things for yourself.



## **NDIS plan**

An NDIS plan is a document that includes information about:

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- what supports you need
- the NDIS funding you will receive.



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