# **Future Access Experience for Children Under 7**

## Benefits we are working to deliver

### Joining the NDIS

#### Learn about the NDIS

You’ll have access to more consistent information about the NDIS through multiple channels including the NDIS website, our contact centre and your Early Childhood (EC) Partner.

You’ll be able to contact an EC Partner who can help connect you to mainstream supports and advise you on how the NDIS may be able to support you and your child’s developmental needs.

#### Work out support needs and explore short term early intervention services

Your EC Partner will work with you and your child to help you understand what services and supports may be available, as well as discussing goals and aspirations for your child and family.

Your EC Partner will assist you in connecting with community and mainstream supports in your area.

If required, your EC Partner will provide you with short term early intervention services with your child and family. These services will be provided by your EC Partner alongside community and mainstream supports without a need for progressing to NDIS funded supports.

#### Apply for the NDIS

If required, you will work with your EC Partner to commence an NDIS access request.

Your EC Partner will explain the NDIS and guide you through the next steps in the process, providing information on: timeframes; the independent assessment; and next steps.

While your EC Partner is assisting you in applying for the NDIS, they will ensure you remain connected to your community and mainstream supports.

#### Independent assessment

Independent assessments will be free, easy to access and completed by your EC Partner.

Everyone will get access to high quality assessments that will inform more consistent and fair NDIS decisions.

You will get your child’s assessment results.

#### Access decision

Your child’s independent assessment will inform whether they are eligible for NDIS funded supports.

If your child is found eligible for the NDIS, they will progress with the planning process and development of funded supports.

If your child does not meet the access requirements for the NDIS, your EC Partner will assist you in maintaining your established community and mainstream supports.

### Reviewing your plan and goals

#### First check-in

If your child is eligible for the NDIS, your EC Partner will check in with you to explain the decision and next steps.

You will be able to talk about the existing community and mainstream supports that can assist you and your child on an ongoing basis, as well as other supports available to your child.

#### Draft plan

You will get a draft plan with a draft Personalised Budget before your plan approval meeting.

Your child’s plan will be easier to understand and use – with a flexible budget and a fixed budget.

Your EC Partner can explain the draft plan to you in a way that makes sense and prepares you for the plan approval meeting.

### Creating your plan

#### Plan approval meeting

You will meet with the person approving your child’s plan, who will have received specific training in how to support children in the Early Childhood Pathway.

There will be no need to negotiate each support as you will have much more choice and control over how you use your child’s plan.

You will have an opportunity to discuss your child’s flexible and fixed budget allocations and how you would like to access and manage your child’s budget.

### Using your plan

#### Plan implementation meeting

Plan implementation meetings with your EC Partner will focus on helping you and your child to get the most of the plan to support your child’s development and their inclusion in every day life.

Your EC Partner will provide greater support to help you fully utilise your child’s plan, if needed.

Plans will not have predetermined end dates, rather they will be re-assessed depending on your child’s changing needs and your family’s circumstances. We know this will be more frequent for young children than older participants.

#### Using your plan

Your child’s plan will be much more flexible, giving you more choice and control about how you spend your funding.

Your EC Partner will provide guidance that will help you understand and access best practice in Early Childhood Intervention to achieve the best outcomes for your child.

We will encourage you and your providers to focus on supporting your child in their natural environments.

### Transition to community and mainstream support

#### Transitioning from the NDIS

If your child has a developmental delay and is approaching 6 years old. You will be supported by your EC Partner to exit from early intervention support provided by the NDIS and continue to engage with your community and mainstream supports.

## Tailored approaches for:

* Children from culturally and linguistically diverse communities
* Children with complex support needs
* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families
* Children and families in remote and very remote areas

## Problems we are working to solve

### Joining the NDIS

* It can be difficult to find consistent information to understand what supports are available through both the NDIS and the community
* Completing the NDIS application form can be time consuming and challenging
* You’ll speak to multiple people and don’t know how your request is progressing
* Plan reviews take a lot of time to prepare for
* Parents have to complete a full plan review each year, which takes a lot of time and effort that could be better placed supporting their children’s needs
* Parents/carers have to gather evidence of their child’s needs at every plan review and re-tell their story

### Reviewing your plan and goals and creating your plan

* Planning meetings feel like a negotiation for support
* The person approving the plan doesn’t may not always fully know how to support early childhood needs and you do not get an opportunity to talk to them yourself.
* The planning process can feel unnecessarily complicated to receive the support your child needs
* There can be delays with approving plans and long quote approval processes
* You don’t see a draft plan before it is approved
* Approved plans are not explained

### Using your plan

* Current plans have limited flexibility which means you can’t decide how to use your plan
* Not everyone gets enough support to implement their plan well
* Plans aren’t always well used because the current funding categories are too rigid and not flexible
* It is difficult to make changes to your plan

## Future Access Experience for Children Under 7 – detailed overview

### Learn about the NDIS

Parents and carers connect with their local NDIS Early Childhood (EC) Partner.

Your EC Partner works with your family to provide information assist with understanding local mainstream and community services.

Your EC Partner will provide guidance and information to help you make decisions.

Your EC Partner can discuss any concerns you have about your child’s development.

### Get some useful information

Your EC Partner will gather information about your child’s functioning and help you understand what services and supports can help your child work towards their goals.

If required, your EC Partner will provide short term early intervention support for your child and family.

These supports are provided without the need for your child to become an NDIS participant.

Your EC Partner will support you to transition to community and mainstream support services if they will meet your child and family’s needs.

### Apply for the NDIS

If required, the EC Partner will support you make an NDIS access request.

### Independent assessment (with EC Partner)

If your child meets the initial eligibility check, the EC Partner will complete an independent assessment with your family.

A copy of the results will be provided to you and your family.

### Access decision

If your child meets all of the access criteria, you will be advised they are eligible for the NDIS.

If your child does not meet the access requirements for the NDIS, you will be referred to continue engaging with community and mainstream services who will continue to support your child’s development.

### First Check-In

If your child is eligible for NDIS funded supports, your EC Partner will contact you to inform you of the decision, explain what meeting access means and what the next steps are in receiving an NDIS plan.

### Receive Draft Plan

A draft plan is developed by the NDIA using the information already available from your child’s independent assessment.

This draft plan is provided to you.

This draft plan won’t include details about the supports you want to purchase. Instead, it might include:

* Participant and family details
* Mainstream and informal supports available to you
* A draft Personalised Budget

You will also be given information on what you’ll need to do to prepare for the plan approval meeting.

Your EC Partner can help you prepare any additional information required for fixed supports or where quotes or additional information is required.

### Hold Plan Approval Meeting

You will meet with an NDIA delegate to review the draft plan and Personalised Budget. This delegate will be a specialist in supporting young children with early childhood plans.

At this meeting you and the delegate will discuss:

* Plan management options
* When the plan will be reassessed (up to 12 months)
* When you’d like the NDIA to check in with you
* How frequently you’d like funds to be released
* Your child’s fixed and flexible budgets

You can discuss any additional high cost supports not previously identified – things like high cost assistive technology or home modifications. The delegate will provide guidance on what supporting information will be required to finalise funding for this support, if it is required.

The intention of this meeting is for your child’s plan to be approved in this meeting.

### Hold Plan Implementation Meeting

You will meet with your EC Partner to discuss how their new NDIS plan can be used to help you and your child pursue your goals.

The EC partner will provide information and support to help you understand and implement your child’s plan. They will also show you how to use the participant portal.

The EC partner will help you understand how to find providers who will be likely to support your family and child needs and provide information about best practice in early childhood intervention.

### Using Your Plan

Your EC Partner will check in at least annually, in most cases more often.

For smaller plan changes, including administrative changes or minor changes to fixed supports, a variation can be made to your child’s plan.

Your child will need a new independent assessment completed by your EC Partner when:

* your circumstances change, requiring changes to the funded supports in your child’s plan
* a significant milestone is reached (e.g. starting school)
* it’s been more than a year since your child’s last independent assessment

### Transition to Community and Mainstream Support

If your child has a developmental delay and is approaching the age of 6, there will be additional support and check-ins to ensure you and your child are prepared for transitioning to community and mainstream supports, if they no longer required NDIS funded supports.