

A support coordinator is not an independent advocate. In line with the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013 (Cth)*, an independent advocate cannot be:

- A staff member of the NDIA
- A staff member of the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
- A registered or unregistered NDIS provider, including support coordinators.

The [Disability Advocacy Fact Sheet](#) outlines what disability advocacy is, why it is important and why independence matters.

Support coordinators should help participants engage with community and other government services.

However a participant's support coordinator should not be acting as their formal advocate. A support coordinator's role is to refer and connect a participant to advocacy services where necessary.

Some questions which might help identify when a support coordinator might be moving into the role of an advocate include:

- Have I done all I can to help the participant make their needs clear to the provider, worker or government system through the established processes?
- Is the participant entering into a dispute, especially where there is legal involvement or escalation to administrative appeals?
- Have I fallen into dispute in a way that undermines my role and effectiveness as a support coordinator?
- Does my involvement in an NDIS review process create a conflict of interest, especially if I am requesting more support coordination funding at the participant's plan reassessment?
- Is the level of complexity or time required to adequately represent the person beyond the level of support allocated to support coordination?
- Is the level of representation required beyond my skills and capacity, and the participant would benefit from an experienced advocate?
- Is there an appropriate formal advocacy service to refer the participant to?

If the answer to some of these questions is 'yes', then a support coordinator should consider whether their participant might benefit from formal advocacy and assist them to find a suitable advocacy service.

The [National Disability Advocacy Program \(NDAP\)](#) supports people with disability to access effective advocacy that promotes, protects and ensures their full and equal enjoyment of human rights and participation in our communities.

This page current as of

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