

# Social and Recreation Support

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**Quick summary:** Social and recreation activities are an important part of life for many people. You may be able to enjoy these activities independently, or with support from friends, family and the community. If you need extra help to participate in social and recreation activities because of your disability, we may be able to fund this. You'll still need to pay for the general costs of your social and recreation activities. These are costs that everyone has to pay for. This means you will pay for things like membership, basic equipment or entrance fees.

**Note:** When we say 'your plan' we mean your NDIS plan. If you're looking for information about your Community Connections plan, go to [Our Guideline – Community Connections](#).

If you're looking for information about your child's early connections plan, go to [Our Guideline – Early Connections](#).

## What's on this page?

This page covers:

- [What do we mean by a social and recreation support?](#)
- [How do we decide if social and recreation support is reasonable and necessary for you?](#)
- [How do you get social and recreation support in your plan?](#)
- [What happens once you have social and recreation support in your plan?](#)

You might also be interested in:

- [Work and Study](#)
- [Assistive Technology](#)

## What do we mean by social and recreation support?

Social and recreation supports are key to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) achieving its objective to support people with a disability to achieve independence, social and economic participation.

Social and recreation activities are part of everyday life. These are activities everybody does for fun and can help with your health and wellbeing. They can also help you to meet new people and improve your skills. When we talk about support for social and recreation activity

funded under the NDIS, we mean the extra help you need to take part in these activities because of your disability.

Social and recreation activities can include things like:

- visiting your friends and family
- active hobbies, such as bike riding, skiing or kayaking
- playing sport, such as tennis, surfing or basketball
- going out, for instance to the movies or a concert
- going places for fun, such as shopping or visiting a museum
- relaxing, like meditation or yoga
- learning new skills, like dance, art classes or quilting.

You will need to pay for the costs of the activity that everyone would pay for such as membership or entrance costs. We may then be able to fund the support you need to take part in the activity because of your disability.

You may need short term support to help you get started with your social and recreation activity. This short term support may build your skills so you can participate independently. Or, it could connect you with someone else who can regularly help you to participate. You might also need ongoing support to participate in social and recreation activities. If you need ongoing support we may fund this as well.

For example, you might need extra help to go to a pottery class because of your disability. You would need to pay for the cost of the class. We might fund a support worker to help you operate the pottery wheel if you need help because of your disability. Or, support you to attend a class if your disability means you can't go on your own.

You may already have funding in the core budget of your plan. You can use this for the help you need to participate in social and recreation activities because of your disability. Check with us if you aren't sure how to use the funding in your plan for social and recreation supports.

<b>Social and recreation supports we may fund if you need them because of your disability</b>	<b>We generally don't fund</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialised equipment or modification to equipment to help you to join in social and recreation activities.</li> <li>• Help to build your skills to take part in social and recreation activities.</li> <li>• A support worker to help you participate in activities, such as help changing into sports clothes or setting you up to join the activity.</li> <li>• Help to travel to a recreation event when you can't use public transport and it's not reasonable for family or friends to take you.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The basic cost of the activities that everyone would be expected to pay for like entry fees, registration and membership fees.</li> <li>• Standard equipment you need to take part in a social or recreation activity.</li> <li>• Participation in activities at professional and/or elite level.</li> <li>• Support for a young child to attend or participate in social or recreation activities where parents would normally be expected to stay and support their child.</li> </ul>

When we fund support for social and recreation activities, we'll fund them so you can participate at an entry level. If you want to participate in professional and/or elite level competitions (for example at State or National Championship level, or in competitions for prize money), you'll have to pay for the extra costs of competing at that level.

## How do we decide if the social and recreation support is reasonable and necessary for you?

There are many different supports available to help you join in with social and recreation activities. We'll work with you to find the best way to get the extra help you need because of your disability. We also know your support needs might change over time.

All NDIS funded supports must meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#).

The questions below will help you think about whether we'll consider funding social and recreation supports for you.

Is the social or recreation support:

- directly related to your disability?
- helping you pursue your goals?

- value for money?
- effective and beneficial for you?
- legal and safe?
- something we expect family, friends or the community to provide?
- better funded or provided by someone else?

## Is the social and recreation support related to your disability?

We can only fund social and recreation supports if they are directly related to your disability.<sup>1</sup> When we say 'directly related to your disability', we mean that you need the extra support to take part in the activity because of the effects of your disability.

We don't fund registration fees or standard equipment for social and recreation activities. You will need to pay these costs yourself.

## Does the social and recreation support help you pursue your goals?

When we fund social and recreation supports we need to know that these supports will help you pursue the goals in your plan.

For example, you might have a goal to make new friends and start a new hobby. The support we fund will need to help you pursue that goal.

Learn more about [setting goals](#).

## Is the social and recreation support value for money?

Your social and recreation supports must be value for money, compared to other supports.<sup>2</sup> It is important to consider if:

- there are supports that might achieve the same outcome that are less costly.<sup>3</sup> For example, you might be able to share supports, rather than needing individual supports
- your social and recreation supports will increase your independence, or reduce your support needs in future<sup>4</sup>
- equipment you need could be hired or leased instead of purchased.<sup>5</sup>

## Is the social and recreation support effective and beneficial for you?

We need to check that the social and recreation supports we fund will be effective and beneficial for you. We'll look at whether the supports will help you to participate in a social and recreation activity. This might be something that you haven't been able to do or has

been difficult to participate in because of your disability. We also look at how effective the support has been for other people with the same type of needs as you.

### **Is the social and recreation support legal and safe to use?**

We need to make sure the social and recreation support is safe and legal. We can't fund social and recreation supports if they're likely to cause harm to you or others.<sup>6</sup>

For example, before funding adapted sporting equipment for you, we may ask an occupational therapist to check that the equipment is safe to use and won't hurt you or others.

### **Do we expect your family, friends or the community to provide the social and recreation support?**

When we fund social and recreation supports we think about the different supports family, friends and the community would provide at different ages and stages in your life.

For example, we would expect parents to help their children get to and from social and recreation activities.<sup>7</sup> But we don't expect parents to provide help for adults getting to and from social and recreation activities. This is because parents aren't usually expected to provide this level of help for their adult children.

### **What about children?**

We'll consider if children need extra support because of their disability compared to other children the same age, and what is reasonable for family, friends and the community to provide.

We consider whether:<sup>8</sup>

- because of their disability, a child's support needs are much more than the needs of other children of the same age. This means the family needs to provide a lot more care than would normally be provided for a child of that age
- the support will help build the child's capacity
- the support will reduce any risk to a child's wellbeing
- the support will reduce any risks to family members or friends.

Generally, we won't fund travel supports for children to get to and from social and recreation activities. This is because families or guardians have a role in meeting their child's daily travel needs.<sup>9</sup>

## Example

Debbie is 14 and loves dancing. Debbie has just started lessons at a new dance school but is finding it hard to understand the teacher's instructions. Debbie's dance lessons start at 7pm each Tuesday night. At age 14, we would generally expect Debbie's parents to provide transport for her. This is because parents would usually transport their child to night time dance lessons.

We wouldn't expect Debbie's family to support their 14 year old daughter during the dance lesson. This is because parents don't usually provide support for their teenage children during the class. Instead, we might fund a support worker to help Debbie follow the teacher's instructions. The support could also include training for the dance teacher so she understands Debbie's needs.

## What if you're an adult?

We know that getting support from your family, friends and the community can be important for you and your wellbeing. At times you may prefer to be independent and enjoy social and recreation activities without calling on friends or family to help you.

If you're an adult, we look at whether it's reasonable for your family, friends or the community to provide the extra help you need.

We'll think about:

- how much extra help you need and what type
- whether the activity is the kind of thing an adult would usually do without extra help from family or friends
- if your family, friends or the community provide the extra help, would it pose a risk to your wellbeing or to theirs
- whether support from your family, friends or the community would help you to become more independent, or less independent
- whether it's suitable for your family, friends or the community to provide this support. For example they may not have the capacity to provide the support at the level you require.

Naturally, friends and family often can and want to help, and their involvement can be an important part of enjoying social and recreation activities. Paid supports can't, and are not intended to, replace the support that it's reasonable for family, friends and other community networks to provide.

## Example

Nadine enjoyed yoga as a teenager and used to attend with her sister. Since Nadine's diagnosis of a psychosocial disability, she has wanted to stay at home and not go back to the yoga centre due to feelings of anxiety and isolation, which result from her disability. She's lacked the confidence to go almost anywhere on her own. Nadine's sister tried to encourage her back to yoga but wasn't able to attend the centre with her.

A support worker was funded to support Nadine to return to yoga classes. The support worker helped her become familiar again with the yoga centre and the instructors, helped her find the right clothes to wear and to attend classes. After a few weeks of support to get to know others at yoga, Nadine connected with a person who also attended on their own. Nadine was able to attend yoga without her sister or the support worker and now goes twice a week with her new yoga buddy.

## Is the social and recreation support better funded or provided by someone else?

We don't fund supports that are more appropriately provided by another service or organisation.

For instance, many local clubs and community organisations provide social and recreation activities you can join in with. If one of these services provides the type of help you need, you might not need funded support.

Your My NDIS contact or support coordinator can help you connect to other organisations in the community. They can help you find information on what's available or help you to develop the skills and confidence to connect with those services.<sup>10</sup>

## Example

Jo loves heavy metal and wants to go see some live music but needs some support to do this. Jo's local area coordinator suggests a community group that connects people with a disability to volunteers so that they can go and see bands together. Jo is connected with a volunteer who also loves heavy metal. The volunteer is the same age and lives close by. Now Jo and the volunteer are catching up every fortnight to see a band and they both enjoy the live gigs. Jo and the volunteer continue to learn just how Jo wants to be supported and they are planning some other activities together.

Community organisations, shops and sporting clubs also must take positive steps to remove barriers you may face because of your disability. This is to ensure you receive the same services as everyone else. We call this a 'reasonable adjustment'.<sup>11</sup>

Reasonable adjustments could be things like:

- physical access such as ramps and wide doorways
- giving you the same opportunity to participate. For example, making changes to standard golfing competition rules to allow you to use a motorised buggy
- adapting to suit your communication needs, like using a flash instead of a noise to signal the start of a game or race.

### **Example**

Adeem is a teenager who uses a wheelchair and loves robotics. Adeem is very keen to meet others who have the same interests. Adeem and his mum learn from their local area coordinator about a robotics group running at the local library every Tuesday after school. Adeem, his mum and local area coordinator talk about whether Adeem will need any extra supports to attend the group.

The library already has a ramp and accessible space. This is part of their reasonable adjustment to make sure all community members can access the library. Adeem will need extra support to get in and out of his wheelchair to test the robots on the floor. Adeem doesn't want his mum to stay with him during the robotics group. As a teenager, building independence can be very important. We could fund a support worker to help Adeem get up and down as needed during the robotics group.

For more information on reasonable adjustment check out the [Australian Human Rights Commission website](#). You can also ask your My NDIS contact or support coordinator.

## **How do you get social and recreation support in your plan?**

To get social and recreation support in your plan, you need to give us evidence that helps us understand the disability related supports you need. Talk to your My NDIS contact or support coordinator to work out what evidence we need. Learn more about the [evidence we need before we create your plan](#).

You can give us any new information or evidence about your support needs when you get it or anytime we talk with you.

We will need to understand what support you need because of your disability and what barriers you face to participating in the social and recreation activity. We'll look at any information we have about your support needs when we decide how much support to include in your plan. This may include reports from an allied health professional or psychologist which detail the support you need to take part in social and recreation activities.

Social and recreation support always needs to meet the [NDIS funding criteria](#) before we can include it in your plan.

We'll think about who is best to provide the social and recreation support and, if needed, help you find a service or organisation.

You should think about how you can use your supports flexibly. You may be able to use your supports for different social and recreation activities. You may already have social and recreation supports included in your Core budget. You can use this funding flexibly for the help you need, because of your disability, to participate in social and recreation activities.

You can talk to your support coordinator or My NDIS contact about this at any time.

## What happens once you have social and recreation support in your plan?

Once we've approved your plan, you can start using your supports for social and recreation activities. Talk to your support coordinator or My NDIS contact for more information.

We fund most social and recreation supports in your Core budget. If we fund [assistive technology](#) for your social and recreation supports, you'll find this funding in your Capital budget. Learn more about using your [budget](#).

If your needs change and you don't have enough funding in your plan, you should talk to us. You might be able to use your Core supports flexibly or you might need a change to your plan. Learn more about [changing your plan](#).

## Reference List

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- <sup>1</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules rule 5.1(b).
- <sup>2</sup> NDIS Act s 34(1)(c).
- <sup>3</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.1(a).
- <sup>4</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.1(c), (f).
- <sup>5</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r3.1(d).
- <sup>6</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 5.1(a).
- <sup>7</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.4(a).
- <sup>8</sup> NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.4(a).
- <sup>9</sup> OG - Including Specific Types of Supports in Plans – Section 12.
- <sup>10</sup> OG - About the NDIS – Section 4.
- <sup>11</sup> Discrimination Act 1992 (Ch), ss 5 and 6.