

Guide to Reasonable and Necessary (R & N) decisions

Smart devices – tablets

Case example

Rebecca asks us to fund a tablet, as her therapist has recommended a few apps to help her manage her disability. She supports her funding request with a letter from her therapist.

Would we fund this?

No, we wouldn't fund a tablet device as it's not an NDIS support. A tablet is a day-to-day living cost and not an extra living cost because of your disability support needs.

However, in some situations you can ask to replace an existing NDIS support in your plan with a tablet. This is known as a replacement support. A replacement support must be for your disability support needs, and it must replace an existing NDIS support or supports in your plan.

For example, if you have complex communication needs and require the use of a tablet as an alternative communication device, we may be able to fund this as a replacement support in your plan. If you think a tablet is better for you than another NDIS support, you can ask to replace that support. Only some supports can be replaced. These are listed in the [replacement supports list](#).

You can only spend your funding on a replacement if we have agreed in writing that you can buy this support.

Why wouldn't we fund this?

NDIS laws determine what we can and can't fund. Things we can fund are called NDIS supports. You can use the funding in your plan to buy NDIS supports if they are related to your disability and are in-line with your plan.

Tablets and computers are a day-to-day living cost. Most Australians have them, and most of the community uses them. A day-to-day living cost is not an NDIS support.

In some specific circumstances, we can fund supports that are not NDIS supports. These are known as [replacement supports](#). A replacement support must meet certain criteria and replace an existing NDIS support in your plan. You can only spend your funding on a replacement if we have approved that you can buy this support. The replacement support must be from the approved [replacement supports list](#).

What else do we think about?

To determine if a tablet can be considered a replacement support for you, it must meet certain criteria. It must:

- replace an NDIS support or supports in your plan

- help you do the same or more than the NDIS support or supports it's replacing
- cost the same or less than the NDIS support or supports it's replacing.

Case example

Four year old Isaac has autism spectrum disorder and doesn't use speech to communicate. Isaac's speech therapist recommends a tablet and specific apps to help him communicate. He has funding in his plan for mid-cost assistive technology.

Isaac's mother Anita asks us to fund a tablet and the cost of the apps as a replacement support. She supports her request with Isaac's therapist's written recommendation on apps, including information about the cost of a tablet and the apps.

The planner looks at whether:

- it is a replacement support from the pre-approved [replacement supports list](#). If the replacement support is not on this list, you won't be able to ask for it
- it will replace an NDIS support or supports in Isaac's plan
- it will help Isaac do the same or more than the NDIS support or supports it's replacing
- it costs the same or less than the NDIS support or supports it's replacing.

In Isaac's case, the planner decides that:

- Isaac has complex communication needs because he can't communicate using verbal speech
- a smart tablet used for communication and accessibility needs is on the replacement support list
- the tablet and communication apps are the only way that Isaac can communicate but the tablet must not be a shared device
- the tablet and communication apps are the best solution to meet Isaac's communication needs
- he can replace some of his mid-cost assistive technology budget for the tablet and communication apps.

The planner approves funding for the tablet and communication apps as a replacement support.

For more information, go to:

- [Our Guideline – Reasonable and necessary supports](#)
- [Our Guideline – Assistive Technology](#)
- [Replacement supports list](#).