Expert advisory group to help guide the NDIA on co-design and improvements to the NDIS for children and their families

23 July 2024

A new expert advisory group featuring some of Australia's most respected early childhood experts will help shape improvements to the experience of children and their families in the NDIS.

The Minister for NDIS, the Hon. Bill Shorten MP announced the group today and said the Children's Expert Advisory Group (Advisory Group) would work with the National Disability Insurance Agency to co-design improvements to the NDIS for children and their families, including those arising from NDIS Review recommendations accepted by the Government.

The Review identified several improvements to the NDIS so that children with disability and developmental delay get the support they need.

Some of these recommendations included making sure families can access supports that are best practice, that there is support to access the NDIS when its needed, and the NDIS and other systems like education work better together.

"We know that early childhood supports are critical to kids getting the right start in life and the NDIS Review told us that we need a much more holistic and connected system of support,'' Minister Shorten said.

"It's fantastic to have a group of people with such diverse and relevant experience on board to help shape changes to NDIA policy, practice and process and make sure our kids are flourishing."

The Advisory Group will include organisations representing the interests of children and their families and carers.

The Australian Government introduced the NDIS Amendment (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) Bill 2024 earlier this year. To help introduce the changes recommended by the review in a positive and coordinated way, the Advisory Group will be an important group for the Agency to shape any changes to NDIS policy, practice, and processes.

The Advisory Group's work will align with the Agency's broader approach to engagement and co-design, and will:

- Provide targeted, expert advice to the NDIA on specific strategies to deliver improved experiences across the participant pathway for children, their families and carers.
- Provide targeted, expert advice to support engagement and co-design of NDIS improvements for children their families and carers.
- Assist the NDIA to provide clear and consistent communications to children, their families and carers about the NDIS.

The NDIA will also seek feedback from other stakeholders, including importantly direct participant experience. The Advisory Group will help the Agency to have the best possible approach to co-design

with children and their families.

On the back of co-designing reforms introduced earlier this year, the Advisory Group's establishment is another step forward in the Agency's commitment to working in partnership with people with disability and their supporters on the future of the Scheme.

Advisory Group member and CEO – Children and Young People with Disability (CYDA), Skye Kakoschke-Moore said the CYDA welcomed the establishment of the Advisory Group and looked forward to representing the needs and lived experiences of children with disability and their families.

"The NDIS provides vital support to children, particularly in the early years, but we know the scheme can be difficult to access and navigate," Skye said.

"We look forward to working with government to ensure reforms meet the needs of our community, and result in the best possible outcomes for children and young people."

The members of the Children's Expert Advisory Group

- Sylvana Mahmic – NDIS Independent Advisory Council
- Skye Kakoschke-Moore - Children and Young People with Disability Australia
- Yvonne Keane – Reimagine
- Samantha Page – Early Childhood Australia
- Gretchen Young – SNAICC National Voice for Our Children
- Jenny Karavolos – Australian Autism Alliance
- Morgan Fitpatrick - Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention Network
- Professor Sharon Goldfeld – Centre for Community Child Health
- Dr Tim Moore – Centre for Community Child Health
- Professor Valsamma Eapen – University of NSW
- Sebastian Langdon-Macmillan – Member Youth Steering Committee
- Ellen Gould – NDIS Independent Advisory Council Reference Group Member

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