

11. Sustaining informal supports

The informal support provided by parents, siblings and other family members is vitally important to people with disabilities. In addition to the support provided, the close relationships that participants have with the people who provide this informal support can also be highly important.

Therefore, the ongoing capacity of family members and carers to provide these informal supports can often be critical to the wellbeing of participants.

Support loads and other factors such as illness or ageing can place a carer's wellbeing at risk and compromise their capacity to continue in their caring role. Accordingly, the NDIA recognises that sustaining these informal supports can often be an integral component of meeting a participant's needs.

The NDIA aims to increase the social and economic participation of people with disabilities within the context of their families and existing support networks. The NDIA will use the planning process to build an understanding of a participant's overall support needs, including identifying the range of informal supports which are available and how they can be sustained.

11.1 Does the NDIA fund family members to provide supports?

Funding a family member to provide supports to a participant can be detrimental to family relationships.

For example, the consequences of funding a family member to provide supports may include unintentionally creating an environment where a participant's wishes in relation to their care arrangements or the delivery of their supports is diminished, or there is no or limited respite for the family worker taking on the role of support worker.

Generally, the NDIA will only fund family members to provide supports in exceptional circumstances. For example, when:

- there is a risk of harm or neglect to the participant;
- there are religious or cultural reasons for funding a family member to provide supports; or
- the participant has strong personal views, for example in relation to their privacy or dignity.

The NDIA will consider the circumstances of each case, any wishes expressed by the participant and also take into account [what is reasonable to expect others to provide](#) .

The NDIA will not fund a family member to provide personal care or community access supports unless all other options to identify a suitable provider of supports have been exhausted.

Including Specific Types of Supports in Plans Operational Guideline -

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Note, if the funding for supports under a participant's plan is managed by the NDIA, family members will only be able to be funded to provide supports if they are a registered provider of supports (see [Registered Providers](#)).

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