



Leap in! ebook series



Autism and the NDIS:

A guide to funding and support options.

Leap in!



Autism and the NDIS: A guide to funding and support options.

Contents.

Part 1: The NDIS and autism.....	4
Part 2: NDIS access and eligibility	7
Part 3: What the NDIS may fund... and what it won't	13
Part 4: Therapy supports	23
Part 5: The Support Coordinator advantage	34
Part 6: Supports for autistic children at school	37
Part 7: Supports for autistic people at work	41
Part 8: Information, tools and advocacy: Autism organisations	46
About Leap in!	49

Copyright © 2025 Leap in! Australia. All rights reserved.

Second edition: January 2025.

This information is provided by Leap in! and is for general information purposes only.

All information, reference material and links are correct at the time of publication. All reasonable endeavours are made to ensure it remains current.

The most recent version can be found at leapin.com.au.



Introduction.

More than 230,000 Australians on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) are autistic. In fact, 37% of people with active NDIS Plans report autism as their primary disability.

Here at Leap in! plan management many of our autistic Members tell us how confusing the NDIS can be. There's also a lack of useful information about how you can use your NDIS Plan, not to mention autism-specific information.

That's why we've created this ebook. It's full of helpful information about the NDIS and using your NDIS Plan if you are autistic. We've consulted with our community and our own team members with lived experience to ensure this information is relevant and practical.

In this ebook you'll find loads of tips, examples from our community about how they're using their plans, and more. And, we cover information for both children and adults.

We also delve into some of the tricky topics such as the types of therapies the NDIS may fund.



A note about language: After seeking input from our community, we've chosen to use 'identity-first' language. We know there are different opinions on this and we acknowledge and respect people's individual preferences and right to choose how their identity is described.



The NDIS and autism.

A snapshot of the NDIS and autism.

The NDIS fully rolled out across Australia in 2020. It now supports more than 680,000 people with disability.

- Autism is the most common disability among participants in every Australian state and territory
- 37% of people with NDIS Plans report autism as their primary disability
- 79% of autistic participants are aged 18 years and under
- More people joining the NDIS for the first time are autistic adults
- The number of autistic participants with active NDIS Plans increased 5% in 2024
- In 2024, 99% of autistic people aged 18 and under who applied for the NDIS were accepted
- \$8.56 billion worth of supports were provided to autistic participants in 2024
- The average payment for an autistic participant in 2024 was \$36,500
 - \$24,000 for under 18
 - \$49,200 for over 18 not in Supported Independent Living (SIL)
- The number of participants with autism increased by 21% in 2024.

NDIS supports.

In October 2024, the NDIS introduced a definition of NDIS supports that applies to all participants.

There are two lists that cover:

1. What you can spend your NDIS funding on (what IS an NDIS support)
2. What you are not allowed to spend your NDIS funds on (what is NOT an NDIS support).

In addition, the NDIS will only fund supports related to the 'impairments' (a term the NDIS has introduced) that led to your acceptance onto the scheme. You can read more about impairments on [page 8](#).

The statistics above are up to September, 2024.



This means you can only spend money in your NDIS plan on supports that relate to the impairment identified during your initial 'access request' to the NDIS.

Support categories.

Funding in your plan is split into support categories, which are sometimes called support budgets. These are *Core supports*, *Capital supports*, *Capacity Building supports* and *Recurring supports*.

Some funding can be used flexibly and without a quote. Some supports may require a quote. You may also have what are called 'stated supports' – this funding must be spent on the specific item listed in your NDIS Plan.

In each support budget is a series of categories. The NDIS defines the types of services and supports that you can purchase from each category.

Core supports provides funding for things that help with everyday activities and your disability-related needs. They can be used to purchase physical items, or for assistance with activities you undertake in daily life.

Core supports are the main support category and most people will have this budget in their NDIS Plan.

Capacity Building is for supports to enable you to become more independent and assist you to learn new skills. These should be connected with your goals.

Examples may include living more independently, finding a job, or getting help to manage your NDIS Plan.

Capital supports fund high-cost assistive technology or one-off purchases such as Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA). *Capital supports* are the least flexible NDIS budget category. Your budget for this support is restricted to specific items identified in your NDIS Plan.

Recurring supports (PACE plans only) are paid directly to you on a regular basis. This means you don't need to make a claim for these supports. Currently, the only recurring category is *Transport*. It covers the costs of everyday transport like taxis and rideshare services if you can't access public transport because of your disability.

Reasonable and necessary.

'Reasonable and necessary' is an NDIS phrase you'll come across regularly. Any purchase made with your NDIS funds must pass the reasonable and necessary test.

Reasonable is something that is fair and necessary is something you need because of disability.

To be considered reasonable and necessary, a support must:

- Be related to your disability needs
- Help you pursue your goals
- Help improve economic and community participation
- Be value for money
- Be effective and beneficial
- Take into account what is reasonably expected for families and communities to provide
- Be an NDIS support for the participant.



PACE and NDIS changes

PACE is a new computer system for the NDIS and its partners, which was introduced in late 2023. It's replacing the existing computer system, which is often referred to as PRODA. All new NDIS Plans and most people who go through a plan reassessment will be moved onto the PACE system.

In addition, the federal government is rolling out NDIS reforms, starting with significant changes from October 2024. We refer to these changes throughout this ebook.



02

NDIS eligibility and access.

To access the NDIS, you need to meet both the eligibility and disability requirements. Some of these requirements have changed recently, as a result of the NDIS legislation that came into effect from October 2024.

Meeting the eligibility requirements.

You may be eligible for the NDIS if you meet these requirements:

1. You're aged between 9 and 65. Children aged younger than 9 and their families can be supported through the Early Childhood Approach.
2. You live in Australia, are an Australian citizen or permanent resident, or hold a permanent visa or Special Category Visa (SCV). New Zealanders living in Australia are only eligible for the NDIS if they are an Australian resident or SCV holder.
3. You meet the disability requirements or early intervention requirements or both. Eligibility is focused on how a disability affects your ability to actively participate in work and society.

Meeting the disability requirements.

To meet the disability requirements, the NDIS needs evidence of all of the following:

- Your disability is caused by an impairment
- The impairment is likely to be permanent (lifelong)
- Your permanent impairment substantially reduces your functional capacity to undertake one of or more of the following activities: moving around, communicating, socialising, learning or undertaking self-care or self-management tasks
- Your permanent impairment affects your ability to work, study or take part in social life
- You'll likely require support from the NDIS for your whole life.



Impairments and the disability requirements.

When considering disability, the NDIS thinks about whether there's any reduction or loss in your ability to do things because of loss of or damage to your body's function. The NDIS refers to this as an 'impairment'.

To meet the disability requirements, the NDIS must have evidence your disability is attributable to at least one of the impairments below:

- Intellectual
- Cognitive
- Neurological
- Sensory
- Physical
- Psychosocial disability.

Even when your condition or diagnosis is permanent, the NDIS will check if your impairment is permanent too.

Autism and the disability requirements.

For the most up-to-date information on autism and the disability requirements, we recommend visiting the [NDIS website](#).

An autism diagnosis may not be enough to gain you access to the scheme as the NDIS will also assess your support needs as they relate to any impairments.

NDIS impairment notices.

From January 2025, all new NDIS participants will receive an 'impairment notice', which is a new type of document issued by the NDIA that says you have a permanent disability or significant impairment. It will list impairment(s) that meet the disability and/or early intervention requirements.

The NDIS will now only fund supports related to the impairments that led to your acceptance onto the scheme. This means you can only spend money in your NDIS plan on supports that relate to impairment/s identified during your initial access request.

How to apply for the NDIS.

Applying for the NDIS is about providing confirmation and evidence that you, or someone you care for, meets the eligibility and disability criteria to get NDIS supports.

Starting the process.

1. Contact the NDIS contact centre on 1800 800 110. They will refer you to an NDIS partner to assist. The NDIS partner will be a Local Area Coordinator or an Early Childhood Partner depending on the age of the person applying for the NDIS.
2. The NDIS partner will help you collect the information and evidence needed to apply for the NDIS. This includes verifying your identity, residency status and disability. You'll also need to provide information about your functional capacity.

To prepare for this process, it's helpful to collect some relevant information:

- Reports and assessments
- Evidence of diagnosis
- Proof of identity and other relevant documents.

3. If you're likely to be eligible for the NDIS, the NDIS partner will work with you to enter the information into the NDIS computer system. If you're not eligible, they can connect you with other community and mainstream supports.

For people in areas without NDIS partners.

Don't worry if there's no NDIS partner in your area, you can still get help to apply to the NDIS by calling 1800 800 110.



Top tip: The NDIS will use the information you provide to create your first plan so it's important to provide detail about your disability, functional capacity and support needs to get a plan that suits your needs.

The NDIS journey.



The steps in the process.

- 1. Call the NDIS on 1800 800 110.** They will connect you with an NDIS partner who can help you apply.
- 2. The NDIS will assess your request:** The NDIS will evaluate your application and supporting evidence to determine if you meet the access criteria. You'll receive a letter informing you whether your application has been successful or if more information is required.
- 3. Meet with an NDIS Planner to develop your NDIS Plan:** If your application is approved, an NDIS Planner or Local Area Coordinator (LAC) will contact you to arrange a meeting. During the meeting, you'll talk about your current supports, daily activities, goals and what you need to achieve them. Together, you'll create a personalised NDIS Plan that outlines the supports and services required to help you reach your goals. This is also where you decide how you want your plan to be managed – self-managed, plan-managed (through a plan manager like Leap in!), or NDIA-managed.
- 4. Receive your approved plan:** You'll be provided with a copy of your approved NDIS Plan, either by mail or through the NDIS *myplace* portal. Take the time to read through your plan carefully and note the funded supports and how they are categorised.
- 5. Implement your plan:** Find and engage providers who can deliver the support outlined in your plan and help you achieve your goals. This may include finding a support coordinator, therapists, support workers or equipment suppliers.
- 6. Review your plan:** Keep track of how your supports are helping you achieve your goals and note any changes in your needs. Before your plan ends (usually after 12 months), you'll have a review meeting to discuss what's working and what needs to change.



Managing your NDIS funding.

At your plan meeting, you will be asked how you want to manage the funding in your plan.

There are [four options](#) for managing your NDIS funds:

1. Plan management
2. Self manage
3. NDIA managed
4. A combination of the above.

If you want to use both registered and unregistered NDIS providers such as retail stores or unregistered online stores, you'll need to have a plan manager or self manage.

Plan management gives you full choice and control over how you use your NDIS funds, with the support of a plan manager like Leap in! They help you manage your budgets and pay your provider invoices. Think of it like your own NDIS-funded bookkeeper with a support team attached.

If you would like extra support to manage your NDIS Plan, all you have to do is ask for plan management at your plan meeting, plan reassessment or any time by contacting the NDIS. **There is no cost to you for plan management.**

Once you have plan management included in your NDIS Plan, you need to let the NDIS know who you want to be your plan manager. The NDIS calls this 'endorsing' your plan manager. You need to endorse your plan manager before they can access your budgets and start processing invoices. You can do this by calling or emailing the NDIS.



03

What the NDIS may fund... and what it won't.

Navigating the NDIS can be complex, especially when it comes to accessing the supports and services for autistic adults and children. From building essential life skills to accessing therapies and navigating transitions, the NDIS can fund supports that empower autistic people to lead fulfilling and independent lives.

By understanding and using the supports available, you can maximise opportunities for growth, independence and inclusion.

Daily living skills.

The NDIS may fund supports that develop essential daily living skills, such as personal hygiene, grooming, dressing and meal preparation. This could include assistance from support workers and training and development activities for participants or carers to increase ability to live as independently as possible.

It's common for autistic people in their early and mid teens to have NDIS funding for daily living skills as they build independence in their day and getting around.



From our community: *"It is common for young children to have very little funding for Core supports in their NDIS Plan. Parents and families are generally expected to provide almost all the care and support a young child needs including providing personal care, taking them to appointments and staying with them while they do activities."*

– Jemma B.

Therapy and allied health supports.

These supports can help you learn new skills including gross and fine motor skills, understanding emotions and executive functioning, language and communication, becoming more independent and improving social interactions

Early intervention services.

For children under the age of nine (including children aged 0-6 with developmental delay), the NDIS may fund early intervention services to address developmental delays and improve skills in areas such as communication, motor skills, cognitive abilities and socialisation. These services may include therapy by allied health professionals including speech pathologists and occupational therapists, and a key worker for a child's family. (See page 32 for details on key workers.)

Support for parents and carers.

Many parents and carers of autistic children play a central role in their child's care, advocacy and development. You may be able to use funding from your child's plan for structured parent training programs focused on learning more about autism, or building specific skills related to supporting your autistic child. These support programs can also offer an opportunity to connect with other families.

Support Coordination.

Support Coordinators are trained professionals who assist participants to navigate the complexities of the NDIS, access appropriate supports and services and coordinate resources to achieve their goals. They can also provide ongoing guidance and assistance as you work towards building independence and mastering life skills.



From our community: *"Ask for Support Coordination at your plan meeting or reassessment, especially if you're new to the NDIS or unsure how it all works. Explain that you want to learn how to manage and better use your funding and get help to connect with the services and supports."*
– Sarah M.

Social and community participation.

Getting out in the community and participating in social events is an important aspect of building independence and social inclusion for autistic adults and children. The NDIS may fund supports to access and participate in community, social, cultural and recreational activities provided in a group setting, in the community or in a centre and support worker support during relevant activities.

It's common for autistic teens to have *Increased Social and Community Participation* funding in their NDIS Plans to help them form interest-based friendships and be active in the community in a way that feels safe and supported.



From our community: *“Through my NDIS Plan I get support workers dropping by twice weekly. Having some company and social interaction with people my age helps improve my communication skills and be more confident when going out in the community.”*

– Henry J.

Individualised Living Options (ILO).

ILO are for people on the NDIS aged 18 or over to help them design a living situation that meets their needs in a home of their choice.

ILO may be right for you if you need help at home for at least six hours a day (formal or informal) and are ready to explore options for home and living. This funding can include helping you decide where to live, help to set up your home, personal care, support workers to assist with personal care, shopping etc., and a range of other supports.

Social skills and communication.

Developing social and communication skills can be helpful for autistic people to navigate social interactions and build meaningful relationships. The NDIS may fund supports like communication aids, and speech therapy to help improve social and communication skills.

Financial management.

Managing finances and budgeting effectively is a vital life skill for anyone transitioning to independent living. The NDIS may fund supports that provide training and development to help you live as independently as possible such as managing finances responsibly.

Employment skills.

For autistic individuals seeking employment, the NDIS may fund supports that build capacity to prepare for, find or keep a job, including the transition from school to work, and from higher education to work.



Assistive Technology (AT).

The NDIS may provide AT funding for devices and equipment to support various aspects of daily living, communication and community participation.

How the NDIS funds assistive technology.

Up to \$1,500 an item (low cost assistive technology).

Budget: *Core supports* (Consumables category).

Details: Supports costing up to \$1,500 can be bought without needing a quote. These items are generally easy to set up and use, and they can be bought from local suppliers or non-disability specific retailers.

Examples: Flipbooks, flash cards, picture boards for communication, continence products.

\$1,500 to \$15,000 an item (mid cost assistive technology).

Budget: *Capital supports*.

Details: For AT costing between \$1,500 and \$15,000 you don't need to provide a quote, but must present some evidence or a cost estimate during your review or planning meeting. These AT items may require more effort to choose and set up correctly to get the best outcome.

Examples: Communication devices, power wheelchairs and pressure care mattresses.

More than \$15,000 (high cost assistive technology).

Budget: *Capital supports*.

Details: For AT over \$15,000, you need an assessment by a professional AT advisor (also called an AT assessor) and a quote. You may also need to show evidence that you have trialled the item and that it was effective. These items are complex, need specialised knowledge or tools to set up, and may be custom-made for your needs.

Examples: Custom-made wheelchairs, complex communication devices, many prosthetics.



General advice for AT purchases.

For any AT purchase, it's recommended to get advice from an AT assessor or experienced professional to ensure you choose the best item for your needs. This helps ensure that the AT you select is effective and meets your specific requirements.

AT and risk.

Aside from cost, another major consideration for purchasing AT with your NDIS funds is risk. The NDIS considers some items as higher risk than others. This means they have more potential to do harm when used in a daily living environment. Such items require a different approval process.

Low risk AT.

Low risk AT are items that are unlikely to cause harm in everyday life, are likely to be readily available in stores, and are easily set up without help. Examples include continence aids, pencil grips, wobble stools or modified cutlery.

Higher risk AT.

Higher risk AT is more complex. These items can cause harm or require professional advice, set up or training to use safely. For example, communication devices that require set up and support from a speech pathologist.

For more information, refer to [Assistive technology approvals](#).



What doesn't the NDIS cover?

Items that are not NDIS supports, and that the NDIS won't fund include everyday living expenses that people without disability would be required to pay. These include:

- Everyday items such as toiletries and cleaning products
- Food or groceries
- Medications
- Mental health early intervention or supports related to mental health that are clinical in nature, including acute, ambulatory or continuing care or rehabilitation
- School, TAFE or university fees
- Rent or mortgage payments
- Standard household and garden items, appliances, tools and products
- Water, gas, and electricity bills, council rates, land taxes and levies
- Water filters, purifiers, or aerators
- Internet devices (such as modems and routers), landline phones, mobile phones (including smart phones), mobile phone accessories, tablets, and sim cards
- Cruises, holiday packages, holiday accommodation and airfares
- Animals (other than NDIS funded assistance animals) including includes pets and companion animals
- Ongoing repairs or home maintenance
- Motor vehicles (though it may fund modifications to motor vehicles)
- Entry fees to cinemas or attractions
- Supports provided by other government or mainstream services such as hospital care, community mental health services, unemployment benefits and child care
- Items that are likely to cause harm to you or other people.

Recent changes to NDIS funding for some common supports.

The recent changes to the NDIS mean some items that autistic people may have previously purchased with their NDIS funds may now not be considered NDIS supports. This means you cannot use your NDIS funds to purchase them. In addition, there are still some grey areas, especially related to sensory equipment and assistive technology.

Sensory equipment.

Sensory equipment is a broad term that covers just about any item that can help a person to develop life or motor skills, or engage with the senses. For some autistic people, sensory equipment can help to regulate sensory sensitivities by providing calming or stimulating inputs tailored to their needs.

Sensory equipment can include everyday items such as puzzles, balls, fidgets or other tools that support regulation or improve focus, and resources that build functional skills.

The NDIS will not fund any item that is considered a day-to-day living expense. This includes children's toys that are not related to disability, as that's something all families are expected to pay for.

Under the new NDIS supports list, standard (non-modified and not adaptive) recreational equipment and tools, including toys and balls are not NDIS supports and cannot be purchased with NDIS funds.

Replacement supports.

In specific circumstances, participants can request a replacement support for items that are generally considered not NDIS supports. It's important to remember that you must get approval from the NDIS **BEFORE** you buy a replacement support. Anyone who purchases something before any written approval is obtained risks having to pay for it themselves. There are two types of supports where this applies.

Standard commercially available household items.

There must be clear evidence that this item is necessary because of the person's disability. The item should help them do the entire activity independently and reduce or remove the need for extra support or AT.

Smart watches, tablets, smartphones or an app used for accessibility or communication purposes.

This covers participants who require the use of a smart watch, tablet or smartphone to meet communication and accessibility needs. For example, a person with complex communication needs who uses a tablet as an alternative communication device, which is their only way to communicate and so cannot be shared, where this is the most appropriate solution for their needs.

A replacement support isn't an extra support. It replaces an existing NDIS support or supports in your plan.

To find out what can be considered as a replacement support, download the list from the [NDIS replacement supports page](#). An application for replacement supports can also be found at the same link.



From our community: *"Your occupational therapist can help assess and identify tools and supports that may be beneficial for you. They can also support you to trial sensory items and write reports that show if they have been effective for your needs."*

– Ashley K.

Will the NDIS fund it?

Swing sets: No. The NDIS considers swing sets as play equipment. It's not generally an item required solely because of a person's disability and is something that many families will have in their backyards. They're also publicly available in parks and public areas.

Trampoline: Not usually. Trampolines are often available and accessible in the community or through community providers. As they're publicly available for a low cost, the NDIS considers the benefit is not enough to justify funding a trampoline. Standard (non-modified and not adaptive) recreational equipment and tools are not considered to be NDIS supports.

Weighted blankets: No. The NDIS perspective on weighted blankets is that evidence has shown that weighted blankets may cause harm. It won't provide or fund a support that "is likely to cause harm to the participant or pose a risk to others".



Assistance animals, pets and companion animals.

The NDIS describes an assistance animal as one that is “specially trained by an accredited assistance animal provider to help you do things you can’t do because of disability”.

Like all NDIS funded supports, an assistance animal will only be funded if it meets the regular NDIS funding criteria and is considered to be a reasonable and necessary support.

The NDIS also looks at whether the assistance animal:

- Offers support that relates directly to your disability
- Helps you to pursue the goals in your plan
- Is effective, beneficial and value for money compared to other support options
- Meets the definition of an assistance animal and is trained by an accredited provider
- Can actively do at least three tasks that you can’t do because of your disability
- Has passed the public access test.

NDIS supports related to assistance animals:

- Assessing, matching and providing an eligible assistance animal
- Dietary needs
- Grooming
- Veterinary services including flea and worm treatments, medication, and vaccinations
- Yearly reviews to maintain accreditation.

What about pets?

The NDIS doesn’t fund pets or companion animals other than assistance animals that meet the criteria above. It views the costs of buying, training, feeding and looking after a pet or companion animal as a day-to-day living cost that’s not related to a person’s disability needs.



Friendships for autistic adults.

We all benefit greatly from having supportive friends to celebrate wins and navigate tough times. But as we move into adulthood, it can be harder to maintain friendships or meet new people.

Our friends at Autism Awareness Australia share some effective strategies to help.

1. Prioritise your needs.

When you're with a new group of people, take a moment to observe their interactions and behaviour. Check-in with yourself to make sure you feel comfortable and respected, and speak up or remove yourself from the situation if you are uncomfortable.

2. Reflect on communication.

Communicating with people you don't know very well can feel daunting. Consider some questions you could use to start speaking with someone. Asking people about their hobbies and interests is a great way to find out more about the other person.

3. Considering social cues.

If eye contact is stressful for you or makes it difficult to focus on what someone is saying, don't force yourself to do it. Follow what the person is saying without making eye contact instead.

4. Managing sensory sensitivities and emotional regulation.

Taking breaks at social events, where you relocate to a quieter space and spend some time alone, can help alleviate anxiety.

Having noise-cancelling headphones or objects to fidget with can help you regulate when there isn't a place to take a break.



5. Support.

Some people find it helpful to bring someone they already know and trust when meeting new people for the first time. This could be a family member, a friend or a support worker.

Work towards developing skills and resilience to navigate social situations and relationships more confidently.

There are a variety of ways to meet other people and work towards forming friendships.

Here are some top tips to get you started.

1. Autism-specific groups.

Connecting with other autistic people can be beneficial for seeking advice, sharing common experiences and finding support from people who understand your perspective.

2. Local community support groups.

Before deciding to attend a group, do some research to determine whether its structure and culture reflect your needs and values.

3. Interest-based groups.

Social interactions with people with common interests can be much less overwhelming, as there is already so much to share and discuss. These groups can exist in-person or online.

4. Online groups.

Many autistic people prefer to interact with others online rather than in person. Whether this is through social media, gaming or online interactions can feel less overwhelming than socialising face-to-face.

Reading social cues or interpreting non-verbal communication becomes a non-issue, and you can communicate and respond to others in a timeframe and manner that suits you.

Friendships are important for everyone, and although they require time, effort and practice, they're incredibly worthwhile and important. For autistic adults, friendships can provide an invaluable support network, improve confidence and self-esteem and provide the opportunity to enjoy shared experiences.

An edited extract of an [article by Autism Awareness Australia](#) shared with permission. Autism Awareness Australia is an organisation committed to improving the lives of all Australians on the autism spectrum and their families.



04

Therapy supports.

Accessing therapy supports can make a difference to many aspects of daily life. Therapy supports are professional services that address specific needs and goals related to communication, behaviour, social interaction, sensory processing and other areas of development or wellbeing.

These supports are provided by qualified therapists or allied health practitioners and are designed to help improve quality of life, independence and interactions with others.

As the autistic experience is diverse, some or perhaps none of these therapy supports will be relevant to your needs.

Also, keep in mind that some therapy supports are not considered NDIS supports and therefore cannot be funded by the NDIS. It is best to check with your Local Area Coordinator if you're unsure.

Therapy supports that are NDIS supports.

These are supports that provide evidence-based therapy to help participants improve or maintain their functional capacity in areas such as:

- Language and communication
- Personal care
- Mobility and movement
- Interpersonal interactions, functioning (including psychosocial functioning)
- Community living.

This includes an assessment by health professionals for support planning and review as required.

Funding for therapy supports delivered by qualified therapists generally comes from the *Capacity Building – Improved Daily Living* budget in your NDIS Plan.



Therapy supports that are not NDIS supports.

The following are not considered evidence-based and cannot be paid for with your NDIS Plan.

- Alternative and complementary therapies
- Alternative or complementary medicine
- Crystal therapy
- Tarot card reading, psychics, mediums and clairvoyants
- Cuddle therapy
- Reflexology
- Aromatherapy
- Sound therapy
- Yoga therapy
- Wilderness therapy
- Animal therapy
- Hair therapy.

Functional Capacity Assessments (FCA).

FCA are evaluations conducted by allied health professionals, such as occupational therapists. They assess an individual's functional capacity or ability to perform 'activities of daily living' and participate in various aspects of life.

The findings of functional capacity assessments may inform the types and intensity of therapy supports in your NDIS Plan.

FCA can be used at various stages of the NDIS planning process:

- As part of the access process when you first apply as an autistic adult. Note that the NDIS does not fund diagnostic assessments.
- Funded in your NDIS Plan to identify therapy supports that are right for you. In this case, you'd likely have funding for assessment, therapy and reports.
- In preparation for your next NDIS Plan as part of the plan reassessment process where necessary or required.

Occupational therapy.

An occupational therapist (OT) is one of the most common allied health professionals that autistics on the NDIS have on their team. They offer a holistic perspective on your strengths, challenges and needs across everyday tasks and many other aspects of life.

For autistic children, an OT is often the first allied health professional contacted following diagnosis. They work with clients to develop a sensory profile, understanding if a person is 'sensory seeking' or 'sensory avoiding', and developing strategies for meeting sensory needs on a daily basis.

An OT can be a fabulous ally for **newly diagnosed autistic adults**. They can help you understand executive functioning and suggest strategies for navigating life's challenges.

OTs work with you to identify strengths and areas for support, helping you to develop positive approaches to self care, communication and participation in school, work and community activities.

You may see an OT at your home, school, place of work or their location of work.



Occupational therapy supports.

Occupational therapists work closely with other allied health professionals such as speech therapists and psychologists.

The following are often delivered by OTs but can also be provided by some other therapists.

Daily activities.

- Offering advice for managing everyday tasks, tailored to your needs
- Using visual communication to help you prepare for changes or new situations
- Help with organising your home and life.

Dealing with emotions.

- Emotional regulation guidance such as understanding what emotions feel like in the body, exploring triggers and stressful situations, and how sensory impacts can affect mood
- Help to understand more about interoception, learning to read your body signals and understand what hunger, toilet, pain and other signals can mean
- Self awareness and self expression so you can more confidently speak up for yourself and advocate for your needs.

**Managing overwhelm.**

- Techniques to reduce sensory overwhelm
- Advice for managing stressful situations and building stress tolerance
- Recommendations for environmental modifications and sensory friendly spaces to create a calming and supportive environment.

Skill development.

- Techniques to develop coordination, strength and dexterity
- Improving fine motor skills such as using cutlery, handwriting, using scissors or tying shoelaces
- Building gross motor skills such as working with an exercise physiologist to exercise specific muscle groups, develop muscle tone and build stamina.

Building capacity.

- Empowering you to develop skills, confidence and independence across different areas of life
- Helping you understand your sensory needs, challenges and strengths
- Work with you on strategies to overcome challenges
- Support to manage transitions such as primary to high school and learning to travel independently.

Assistive technology.

- Recommendations for assistive technology devices and tools to support your needs and goals, such as communication devices, sensory tools, adaptive equipment .

Common OT supports for autistic adults.

- Improving sensory processing and minimising the impact of sensory overload
- Developing motor skills
- Supporting social skills and relationships
- Improving organisational skills
- Supporting positive relationships with food and eating
- Supporting active participation in the community.

Common OT supports for autistic children.

- Supporting them to communicate their own needs
- Developing parent skills to support their child
- Connecting both children and parents to their village of people with similar interests and experiences.



From our community: *“Be sure to keep enough funding in your budget for your OT or therapist to write a report to support your plan reassessment. This can help you get the right funding for your needs in your next NDIS Plan.”*

– Lyn D.

Speech and language therapy.

This therapy is a process that enables people to communicate to the best of their ability. Speech is how we say words while language is more about how we use those words to communicate.

A speech therapist (also called a speech pathologist or speech and language therapist) is an allied health professional who can assist with speech, communication, listening, understanding, social skills and a whole lot more.

If you or your child need support with communication because of disability, you may be able to use your *Capacity Building – Improved Daily Living* funding for a speech therapist.



NDIS speech and language therapy supports.

Speech therapy assessment (excludes diagnostic assessments).

- Varies depending on age, developmental level and areas of concern
- Can include communication skills, speech sound production, fluency, sensory processing, swallowing function, oral motor skills and social communication
- Provides an understanding of the person's communication profile and guides the development of plans to address their unique needs and goals.

Building communication skills.

- Developing verbal and nonverbal communication skills
- Helping to express yourself, be understood and understand the structure of language
- Building independence and confidence
- Understanding your own autistic experience and how to advocate for yourself.

Relationships and social interactions.

- Comprehending communication from others
- Developing confidence in starting conversations
- Recognising and responding to cues such as body language and facial expressions
- Forming and maintaining relationships, including safety and consent.

Mealtimes and swallowing.

- Helping to improve chewing and swallowing more safely
- Using sensory integration strategies to help tolerate different food textures, temperatures and tastes, as well as the sensory environment surrounding mealtimes

Communication aids.

- Helping to identify the right communication aids and how to use them
- Supporting the setup, trial and testing of assistive technology (AT) such as augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices for non-speaking individuals.

Language and literacy.

- Setting language and related goals
- Supporting others to make adjustments to their use of language and communication style



Good to know: Autistic people may encounter sensory challenges with food, restrictive eating habits, or difficulties in meeting their nutritional needs. A qualified dietitian can offer support to help address these challenges. If you or your child require nutritional assistance due to disability, Dietetics is a recognised NDIS support that can be funded under *Capacity Building – Improved Health and Wellbeing*, provided it meets the reasonable and necessary criteria.



Physiotherapy.

A physiotherapist or physical therapist can provide treatment and show you techniques to improve mobility, posture, sensory integration, strength and balance.

Physiotherapists can provide a range of supports for autistic people that help promote physical movement skills and improve wellbeing. They can also support participation in sports and recreation activities.

Physiotherapy supports.

Gross motor skills development.

- Assessment of gross motor skills, including strength, coordination, balance and posture
- Development of personalised exercise programs to improve gross motor skills, such as walking, running, jumping and climbing
- Activities and exercises to promote core strength and stability, which can enhance overall movement control and balance.

Sensory integration.

- Including sensory integration principles into therapy sessions to address sensory processing differences that may affect movement and coordination
- Sensory-based activities and exercises to help regulate sensory input and promote engagement in physical activities.

Flexibility and range of motion.

- Stretching exercises and range of motion activities to improve flexibility and joint mobility
- Strategies to address muscle tightness and stiffness, which can impact movement patterns and overall comfort.

Coordination and motor planning.

- Activities and games to enhance coordination skills, such as catching and throwing, kicking a ball or playing sports
- Practice of motor planning tasks to improve the ability to sequence and execute movements effectively.

Psychology.

Psychologists can be an important source of mental health support for autistics. But the NDIS can only fund psychology under certain circumstances.

The NDIS may fund non-clinical mental health supports that:

- Are not clinical in nature
- Relate to an ongoing psychosocial disability (a disability arising from a mental health condition)
- Focus on building functional capacity and independence.

How psychologists can support you if you're autistic.

- Working through understanding your neurological differences
- Enhancing interoception (being aware of internal sensations in the body)
- Assistance with understanding emotions
- Supporting positive executive functioning
- Developing emotional regulation strategies
- Assisting parents in understanding autism and advocacy
- Providing support to work with other mental health supports and services.

An easy way to think about it is:

NDIS = capacity building mental health supports.

Mainstream system = mental health treatment.

Treatment for mental health conditions including depression and anxiety is provided by the mainstream health service which may include obtaining a mental health treatment plan.



From our community: “For an adult to get psychology funded in an NDIS Plan, you may need to explain why mental health treatment plan sessions aren’t adequate for your needs. Be sure to demonstrate how having a psychologist will assist you to manage the impacts of disability.”

– Jeff B.

Behaviour supports.

Behaviour support involves providing guidance and assistance for managing challenging behaviours by understanding their underlying causes. These behaviours can encompass a range of actions such as hitting, biting, invading personal space and damaging property.

Specialist positive behaviour support is considered an NDIS support, covering supports provided by professionals with specialist skills in positive behaviour support. This includes:

- Assessment, development and delivery of a comprehensive plan that aims to reduce and manage behaviours of concern
- Training and ongoing monitoring of staff in the implementation of a behaviour support plan
- Training and capacity building for a participant's informal supports in the use of positive behaviour support
- Development and delivery of interim or transitional plans.

A behaviour support practitioner can help by identifying triggers for challenging behaviours and teaching strategies for managing them effectively. Central to this process is developing a behaviour profile, which documents the types, frequency and patterns of behaviour over time, often accompanied by a parent impact statement.

This information supports the development of a comprehensive behaviour support plan that can include therapeutic supports, behaviour management strategies, support to develop social skills and other activities.

Funding for behaviour supports comes from *Capacity Building – Improved Relationships*. If you're on the PACE system, this falls under the new category *Capacity Building – Behaviour Support*. If a person requires high intensity positive behaviour support or supervision from a support worker due to complex needs, funding for this support comes from the *Assistance with Daily Life* budget.

The role of key workers in coordinating therapy supports.

The key worker model involves choosing one primary therapist to coordinate all your child's therapies, known as a *key worker*. A key worker is a highly qualified early childhood intervention professional who leads a team of providers and family members to support a child's development.

The most suitable key worker for an autistic child on the NDIS is often an occupational therapist. Occupational therapy, speech therapy and psychology is often the trio of therapy supports for young children.



Autistic musician Sheldon Riley, shares how an autism diagnosis helped him find his voice.

Sheldon Riley is a musician and rising star who uses music to explore all aspects of who he is, including as an autistic person. His songs share an insight into his journey including experience with feelings of being different, overcoming the limitations others set for him and working to achieve his dreams.

Sheldon was first diagnosed with autism at six years old. He shares, “I was told for a long time that I wouldn’t be able to execute myself as a normal functioning human being, to get work or have friends or have a partner.”

But Sheldon had other plans. He refused to be defined by the limitations other people set for him and instead chose to embrace his strengths.

He developed a passion for music and performance and found creative writing as a means of self-expression. In fact, one of the posts he shared on social media as a teenager became the foundation for one of his most celebrated songs.

*“You run and hide the break inside
‘Til you realise that the light shines bright
Through those who broke inside”*

Sheldon’s extraordinary talent first caught the attention of the world as a contestant on talent-based reality shows where he wowed audiences with his powerful voice and beautiful lyrics.

Now Sheldon is one of Australia’s most famous neurodiverse artists and he’s achieved his ultimate dream, to perform in Eurovision, where he was able to share his personal struggle with being different with the world through the lyrics in his song, Not The Same.

The success Sheldon has found as a neurodiverse artist is a shining example of the possibilities available to autistic people in the entertainment industry. He is confident that the future is rich with more opportunity for those who are willing to do the work to get there.

In a post on Sheldon’s Instagram account he shares, “The world will choose difference when given the chance to see it.”



05

The Support Coordinator advantage.

If you're autistic and on the NDIS, having a Support Coordinator can really make a difference to how you use your plan.

Support Coordinators are professionals funded by the NDIS who can help you understand and use your NDIS Plan. Support Coordinators know a lot about the NDIS and how it works so can explain things and guide you through the entire process.

A Support Coordinator can also help you find supports in your area. Plus there are loads more ways that a Support Coordinator can help you to be better organised with your plan and funding.

Having a Support Coordinator can reduce stress and free you up to get on with living your life. Keep in mind that Support Coordinators aren't advocates. They can't represent you or sign agreements on your behalf.



From our community: *"It's helpful to have a Support Coordinator who has lived experience working with autistic people or is autistic themselves. They have a better understanding of your needs and how the NDIS can work for you."*

– Laurel N.

How Support Coordinators can help autistic people on the NDIS.



1. Help you understand and use your NDIS Plan.

Support Coordinators understand NDIS budgets, how they can be used, and how to plan the use of your supports in a way that suits you.

They can help you connect your goals and your NDIS Plan, track progress towards your goals and make adjustments along the way.



2. Connect you with non-NDIS supports.

A Support Coordinator is well connected. They can connect you with non-NDIS supports such as community groups, mainstream supports and other services.

For example:

- For families with autistic children, they can connect you with community organisations, groups for parents of autistic children and early childhood education
- For autistic teenagers making the transition from school to further education or work, they can bring together NDIS and non-NDIS supports to make the process more effective
- They know about other services available so can explain the process to get a companion card, housing, Centrelink supports or a travel concession card.



3. Find alternative supports.

An NDIS Plan may not always fund all the supports you need. A Support Coordinator can help find alternatives to NDIS funded supports if funding is low or if the NDIS won't fund a particular support.

For example:

- If your child has no funding for therapy but needs an OT, they may help you find an OT in the mainstream system that charges lower fees so you're less out of pocket



4. Build capacity and skills.

Support Coordinators can collaborate with other professionals to identify strategies and resources to help people on their NDIS and their families and carers to develop skills.

For example:

- Provide parents with education and knowledge about how best to support their autistic child
- Explain different supports the NDIS may fund such as approved training for parents to better understand autism
- Training and support to better understand your NDIS Plan
- If an autistic teenager is unable to complete school, they may be able to assist in finding a different approach to education such as TAFE and introduce you to TAFE supports and systems.



5. Work effectively with providers.

Finding the right providers, negotiating rates and all of the associated paperwork can be stressful. Support Coordinators are ideal partners when it comes to matching providers with your needs, negotiating service agreements and resolving disputes. A service agreement is a written document outlining the supports, costs, rights, and responsibilities for both you and your provider. It's essential for setting clear expectations and ensuring a successful working relationship.

Support Coordinators can assist in many ways including:

- Bridging communication gaps between autistic individuals and NDIS providers, such as making initial introductions and ensuring information is conveyed in a clear and accessible way
- Organising translation services for people who speak a language other than English
- Conducting regular reviews, gather feedback and address any concerns or issues
- For children on the NDIS, they can organise and attend meetings with providers such as allied health staff and school representatives to ensure everyone understands the child's needs and goals.



6. Prepare for plan meetings.

Your Support Coordinator is someone you work with regularly. They get to know you, how you communicate, your needs and your NDIS Plan. So it makes sense that they can assist you to get ready for plan meetings and plan reassessments.

For example:

- Gathering reports, evidence and documentation to support requests for funding
- Anticipating questions the NDIS may ask and helping you plan responses in advance
- Helping you effectively explain your support needs
- Attending plan meetings with you and your family if needed
- Ensuring the plan you get reflects the agreed services and following up any issues or concerns.

How to get Support Coordination in your NDIS Plan.

If you think you might benefit from working with a Support Coordinator, the first step is to discuss this with your NDIS partner who can assist you with getting funding for Support Coordination in your plan.



06

Supports for autistic children at school.

Under the National Disability Standards for Education, an education provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that students with disability can participate and use the facilities and services provided, on the same basis as a student without disability, and without experiencing discrimination.

The NDIS is designed to provide supports and services that are not funded by other mainstream or government services (including school programs).

As the school system provides some services that can be accessed to support the education of children with disability, the NDIS only provides funding for certain supports.

School supports the NDIS may fund.

Self-care.

Additional self-care at school related to the student's disability. For example, a support worker to assist with eating or toileting. Some self-care supports may be funded by the school so it is best to start with the school system first.

Teacher training.

Specialised training of teachers and other staff about the specific personal support needs of an autistic student.

Assistive technology.

Transportable equipment such as a wheelchair or some personal communication devices other than standard educational tools such as laptops or tablets.

Therapy supports.

Therapies not connected with the student's education that are mutually agreed by the family and school and are provided during school time. Schools may also have some therapy supports available so we recommend discussing this with them first.

Supports related to school education that are not NDIS supports.

The below list covers some of the items that are not considered NDIS supports, and therefore cannot be paid for with NDIS funds.

- Education and tuition fees
- Personalised learning supports for students that primarily relate to their educational attainment
- Aids and equipment for educational purposes. For example, modified computer hardware, education software and Braille textbooks
- Adjustments to buildings such as ramps, lifts and hearing loops
- Textbooks and teaching aids (including alternative formats)
- Tutors and scribes
- Services from a person employed at the participant's school or relevant agency with responsibility for school education
- School refusal programs.

10 tips for supporting your child during transitions.

Some autistic children find change and transitions more challenging than others. Transitions may appear more difficult on some days or in some places, due to other pressures and expectations.

Each young person will cope with transitions and change in a different way. Children may encounter the following transitions:

- Change to class routine
- A different classroom
- Changing teachers or years
- Starting pre-school, primary school or high school
- Changing schools
- Transition from school to work life

The following 10 tips may help to support your child during these times of transition.

1. Plan for the transition.

It's a good idea to make a plan for how you will work through transitions to give yourself the best chance of success.

2. Create visual supports.

Visual supports can support children with skill development, communication and increased independence. They may include real objects, printed images, videos, line drawings and written words. Try creating a visual schedule or weekly timetable for your child.

3. Visit a new classroom or school before the big day.

Doing this will help your child become familiar with a new environment without the noise and crowds. On the visit you could point out different spaces they may access and how to use them.

4. Meet the teacher in advance.

You can discuss your child's strengths and interests, ways to best support them and preferred communication styles.

5. Practice travelling to school together.

If it's via bus, show your child how to enter the bus, use their bus pass, where to sit and when to get off the bus.

6. Focus on your child's strengths and interests.

7. Highlight what's staying the same.

There may be many changes occurring but there will be many things staying the same.

8. Teach skills to help support a successful transition.

Teach your child how to wear the school uniform, open their own lunchboxes and packets, use a public toilet, read a timetable, use a locker and interact with friends.

9. Role play.

Assist your child to talk about what they've done in the holidays or at their previous school so they can talk to their classmates. Print out a few photos to prompt your child if this will help.

10. Take photos of the new environment.

Your child can look at the images to help familiarise themselves, remember where items are located or identify a quiet space.

An edited extract of an [article by Aspect Australia](#), shared with permission. Aspect (Autism Spectrum Australia) is a child safe organisation committed to protecting the rights and interests of children and vulnerable people by providing them with a safe environment.



Preparing for the transition from school to further education or work.

The NDIS can help prepare you for a job if you need more support than what your school provides.

School Leaver Employment Supports (SLES) are designed to help students with disability find and start a job.

- SLES aim to build a bridge between school and work, helping students understand their potential, develop skills and build confidence. SLES may be available throughout the last period of high school and immediately after leaving school for up to two years.
- SLES in an NDIS Plan will be different for everyone and depend on your goals, but cover all aspects of moving from school to work. You can get help for each step of the way, from identifying the type of work you want to do and learning new skills, to moving into the workforce and getting started in a new role.

Examples of supports that SLES may fund include:

- Work experience
- Preparing a resumé and submitting job applications
- Interview preparation
- Getting ready for your first day
- Understanding rights and responsibilities in the workplace
- Working independently and as part of a team.



07

Supports for autistic people at work.

Do you have an employment-related goal? Are you at school and thinking about what's next? Are you on the NDIS and working or doing volunteer work?

If you're on the NDIS and have a work-related goal, whether it's to find a job, earn money, learn new skills or begin open employment, NDIS employment supports may be able to help.

How NDIS employment supports work.

There are many steps on the journey to achieving your career goals. NDIS employment supports cover the entire employment journey, from preparing for work to getting help on the job, to making your next career move.

These include:

- Identifying and developing a career pathway
- Transition to work such as developing skills
- Supports to help you get and keep a job
- Assessments and counselling
- Career planning
- On-the-job support to work in the job or company of your choice.

NDIS employment supports are available in a wide range of workplaces:

- Private and government employers
- Social enterprises
- Micro-businesses
- Self-employment
- Volunteering
- Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE).

Employment related items that are NDIS supports.

The NDIS can fund a range of different supports that build a person's capacity to successfully prepare for, find or keep employment in the open labour market or the supported labour market.

This includes:

- Helping you prepare you for a job if you need more support than what your school provides
- Assistance for a participant to transition to employment
- Further education and training.

Employment related items that are not NDIS supports.

The NDIS won't fund:

- Government funded employment programs including Disability Employment Services and Workforce Australia
- Work-specific aids and equipment required to perform a job, including modified hardware and software
- Reasonable adjustments (including assistive products and workplace modifications) to access a workplace
- Employer responsibilities including recruitment processes, work arrangements, transport for work activities.

NDIS employment supports to support autistic individuals.



1. Workplace assistance.

Workplace assistance can help with building an employment or career pathway. It may be used in an open employment setting or with an Australian Disability Enterprise (ADE).

It can help you become more job-ready or if you already have a job, it can provide support to fulfill your job requirements or study related goals.

It might include:

- Support to discover what type of work you're interested in
- Foundational and communication skills
- Managing complex barriers to employment
- Job customisation
- Career planning
- Transitioning from an Australian disability enterprise into open employment
- Mentoring to understand the opportunities, roles and responsibilities of running a small business (self-employment)

Workplace assistance will appear in *Capacity Building* in your NDIS Plan.



2. Supports in employment – Specialised supported employment.

These are designed for people with a job who need extra support because of their disability. For example, if you need assistance with performing certain work tasks. These supports can also be used to fund additional coaching to operate in the workplace such as help to stay focused, assistance with communication or job customisation.

Supports may be provided individually or in groups and include:

- On-the-job assessments related to the impact of disability on your ability to work
- Job customisation program
- On-the-job training
- Support with work tasks
- A support worker to assist with mobility and personal care at work
- Extra support to manage complex needs.

Supports in employment will appear in *Core – Assistance with Daily Life* in your NDIS Plan.



3. School leaver employment supports (SLES).

[SLES](#) support school leavers to transition from school to work during the final months of school until they are settled in a job. They are tailored to the individual needs of school leavers with disability.

They might include:

- Work experience opportunities
- Skill development
- Understanding work capabilities
- Building confidence
- More information can be found in our story school leaver employment supports.

SLES will appear in *Capacity Building* in your NDIS Plan.



From our community: *“I am making progress in my career with assistance from youth employment support funded in my NDIS Plan. I have an employment mentor supported by NDIS employment assistance who is helping me develop skills like speech writing, public communication, business plan drafting and event coordination to become an advocate for other autistic people.”*

– Connor P.

Tips for a great career as an autistic employee.

Navigating (or starting) a career can present unique challenges and opportunities for autistic employees. While the workplace may feel demanding at times, it can also be a place where you can grow, thrive and build a career that's right for you.

The team at Autism Awareness Australia take a look at ways to set yourself up for work, so you can feel confident and make the most of chances that come your way.

Identify your goals.

Wherever you are career-wise, having goals can help you stay motivated at work and encourage you to learn new skills and ideas.

Here are some things you can think about when creating career goals:

- **Identify your strengths:** Perhaps you're incredibly creative, or your attention to detail is fantastic. Many of our strengths can be harnessed in the workplace.
- **Identify your passions:** What topics or kinds of work bring you joy? This could inform areas of professional development or even a career change.
- **Identify your weaknesses:** This can be tricky, but it can help you to understand work that might not be suited to you. For example, if you find interacting with people you don't know overwhelming, you might avoid jobs in cafes or shops.

Consider your work environment.

If you don't work from home, then there are elements of your work environment that are out of your control. This can be stressful, especially if you're starting a job in a new place, or your workplace has undergone some changes recently.

Most adjustments to a workspace that can better accommodate employees with autism are simple and inexpensive. The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 states that employers must consider if reasonable adjustments could help an employee with disability perform their job or perform their job better.

Here are some easy solutions to common issues:

- Avoiding or replacing fluorescent lights
- Having sunglasses on hand to combat bright lights
- Moving your desk or workspace away from crowded, noisy or common areas
- Wearing noise-cancelling headphones or earplugs

- Flexible work hours to avoid commuting
- Reducing strong smells
- Quiet spaces for relaxation and regulation.

Consider a career mentor.

Buddies or mentors in the workplace can be incredibly beneficial. Not only can this person support your career growth and progression, they can assist you in navigating the social aspects of work and other challenges.

Some workplaces (often larger organisations) have mentorship programs that pair junior employees with more senior individuals within the company.

You can still receive mentoring even if your workplace doesn't have a formal program. If you'd like a particular person to mentor you, talk to them or send a message.

Keep communication open.

Communication is key in all aspects of our lives, especially in the workplace. Reflecting on how you like to communicate and be communicated with can help improve your comfort, confidence and relationships at work.

Consider your communication preferences:

- Identity-first or person-first language (if relevant)
- Do you need more time to process verbal instructions, questions or comments? Or do you prefer email?
- Are there styles of communication that confuse you or cause you to feel anxious?
- Does receiving regular feedback help you feel reassured? Do you prefer feedback verbally or in written form?
- Do you dislike engaging in small talk?

Once you're aware of how you communicate effectively, you can better advocate for what you want and need from your co-workers.

What's next?

There is a range of fantastic information and resources available to autistic people navigating the workplace. Check out [Autism: what next?](#) for details.

An edited extract of an [article by Autism Awareness Australia](#) with permission. Autism Awareness Australia is an organisation committed to improving the lives of all Australians on the autism spectrum and their families.



08

Info, tools and advocacy:

Autism organisations.



**Autism
Awareness
Australia**

Autism Awareness Australia.

<https://www.autismawareness.com.au>

Autism Awareness Australia (AAA) aims to improve the lives of autistic people and their families. Free, evidence-based tools and resources are available to help people navigate daily life, diagnosis, therapies, financial support and the NDIS.

With a strong focus on providing information, AAA offers loads of helpful resources and tools for autistic individuals and their families along with targeted educational programs.

The AAA website is a treasure trove of articles and videos that answer commonly asked questions about autism. Plus, there's a library of trusted, external resources. There are also links to events like webinars, workshops and conferences. All of the information is easy to navigate based on different life stages.

The online hub [Autism: What's Next](#) is a dedicated resource to help guide people through the first year following an autism diagnosis. AAA also provides services to businesses and organisations that want to create a more inclusive experience for autistic people.



Aspect.

<https://www.aspect.org.au/>

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) provides autism assessments and diagnosis, education, community participation and therapy services to autistic people of all ages across Australia.

Many supports and services can be accessed online, including therapy services and assessments. These online services offer additional flexibility and reduced waitlists.

Aspect is a leader in education for children, providing dynamic, individualised learning for autistic students. Aspect Schools deliver education programs to around 1185 children between the ages of 4 years to 17 years through 10 independent autism-specific schools and 113 satellite classes based in mainstream primary and high school settings.

For autistic adults, Aspect has six centres across Melbourne and Sydney that deliver indoor and outdoor activities, community participation, independent living skills, personal care supports and more.

Programs can be funded privately or through the NDIS. Aspect can work with the person directly, a plan manager or the NDIA.



Yellow Ladybugs.

<https://www.yellowladybugs.com.au/>

Yellow Ladybugs is a non-government organisation working toward a more inclusive world for autistic girls, women and gender diverse individuals through events, projects, communication, research and advocacy.

The organisation runs regular informal social events for autistic girls and gender diverse young people between five and sixteen in an inclusive, fun and sensory-friendly setting. There are face-to-face events in Melbourne only and online events Australia-wide.

Yellow Ladybugs delivers autistic-led, neuro-affirming, strength-based and trauma-informed training and education for a range of organisations, businesses and teams. Their training and speaking services focus on building understanding of the lived experience of autistic individuals.

The annual #GoYellow campaign on 2 April every year lights up landmarks, changes colours on socials, and invites people to wear yellow to celebrate autistic girls, women and gender diverse individuals who are often misunderstood, misdiagnosed or missed altogether.

An annual conference brings together autistic experts from the allied health, education, advocacy, research, care-based and creative sectors to find solutions to ideas on how to better support autistic girls and gender diverse youth at school, home and beyond.

Where to find service providers who specialise in working with autistic adults and children.

There are several places to find providers. A good starting point is the Leap in! Provider Network Directory, which you can find at:

<https://www.leapin.com.au/ndis-provider-network-directory/>.

The directory can be filtered for autism and lists providers all over Australia. The autism organisations mentioned in this chapter are also a great source of information. It's a good idea to speak with your networks – other parents or other autistic individuals – to see if they have any recommendations.

Advocacy and support services.

If you have problems with your NDIS Plan, in the first instance, chat with your Support Coordinator, NDIS Planner, Local Area Coordinator or Early Childhood Partner. They may be able to help you resolve any problems or explain the next steps.

If you've just received your NDIS Plan and are not happy with it, you can ask for an internal review which is where someone not involved in creating your plan reviews the plan.

If you're looking for an advocate, start with our story, [Finding your voice: The importance of disability advocacy](#).



About Leap in!

Australia's leading NDIS plan manager.

- Leap in! is Australia's leading NDIS plan manager, supporting thousands of Australians across the country
- We're a business driven by purpose and we believe in people over profits
- Leap in! exists to help people with disability live their best life by getting the most out of their NDIS Plans
- We believe access to expertise and information will deliver better results for people with disability
- In these challenging times we're investing in our services and adding to our plan management team.



Helpful resources.

[Aspect Anywhere services](#)

[Aspect webinars and workshops](#)

[Autism Awareness Australia – Autism in adults](#)

[Autism Awareness Australia – Resources](#)

[Autism Awareness Australia – Teens and young adults](#)

[Reframing Autism podcasts](#)

[Yellow Ladybugs resources](#)

Leap in! resources.

[Ask a plan manager: Autism and the NDIS](#)

[The lived experience of a parent with autistic kids](#)

[Equine assisted therapy](#)

[Food for thought: How to avoid meals times becoming a battleground](#)

[Outside the box: Diverse therapy options for kids](#)

[The Essential NDIS guide: an introduction to NDIS basics](#)

[Goal setting and the NDIS: A practical guide](#)

Leap in!



1300 05 78 78



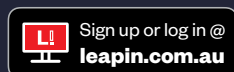
crew@leapin.com.au



leapin.com.au



Download the award-winning Leap in! app.



The Leap in! Crew acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we work and live. We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on this land and commit to building a brighter future together.



At Leap in! we commit to being a safe and welcoming place for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and gender diverse (LGBTQIA+) people to work and to live as their authentic selves, without judgement, without discrimination and free from harassment.