



Participant Pathway

Your guide to being an NDIS participant



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This booklet will help you understand the path you will travel as you work with us (the National Disability Insurance Scheme or NDIS). It will provide an overview of what each stage means for you.

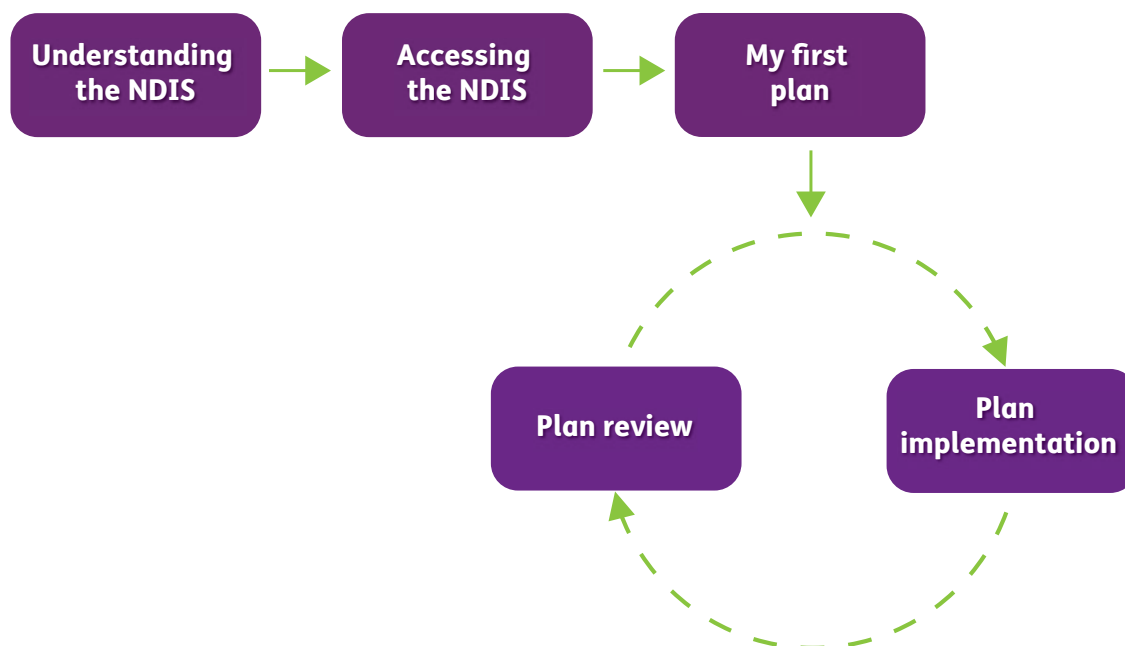
If you need to access the NDIS, there are a few stages to your pathway with us - from understanding and requesting access, to developing and implementing your First Plan.

Your First Plan with the NDIS will continue to give you the support you need now. It will make sure you have time to learn more about all of your options with the NDIS and consider your goals for your next plan.

You can refer back to this booklet as you move from stage to stage to help you to understand what happens next.

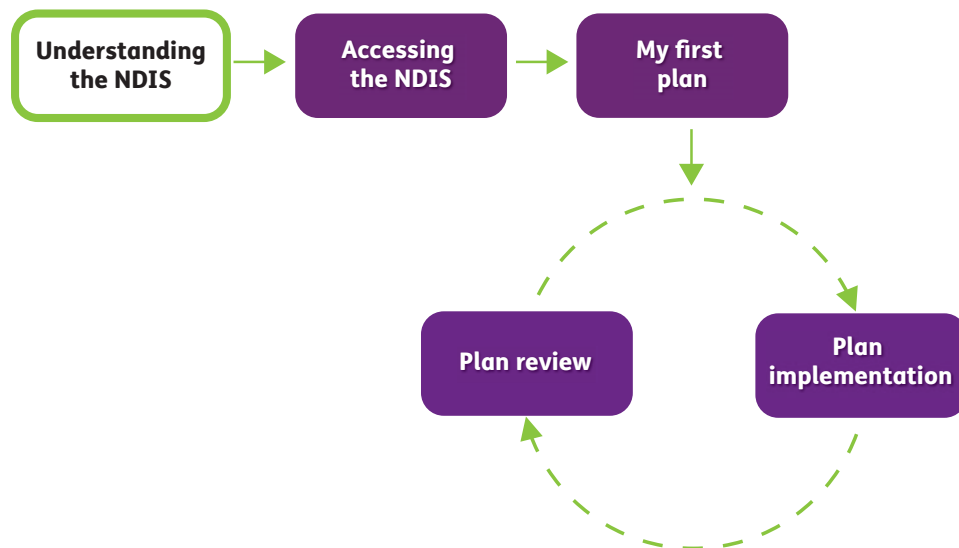
Some words we use to talk about the NDIS might be new to you, so we've explained them along the way. For example when you are part of the NDIS, a person who meets the access requirements and has a plan is called a participant.

Remember, the NDIS will help you throughout your life for as long as you need it, so this pathway will continue on, and you update your plan as your needs change.



The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a new way of providing disability support. The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is responsible for delivering the NDIS.





Understanding the NDIS

The NDIS is a new way of providing disability support.

Everyone's needs and goals are different. That's why the NDIS provides you with the flexibility to manage your individual support needs. It also means your experience at each stage of the participant pathway might be different to another person.

The NDIS helps you to:

- **Access mainstream services and supports**

These are the services available for all Australians, that you receive from people like doctors or teachers through the health and education systems. It also covers areas like public housing and the justice and aged care systems.

- **Access community services and supports**

These are activities and services available to everyone in your community, such as sports clubs, community groups, libraries or charities.

- **Support your informal support arrangements**

This is help you get from your family and friends. It is support you don't pay for and is generally part of most people's lives.

- **Receive reasonable and necessary funded supports**

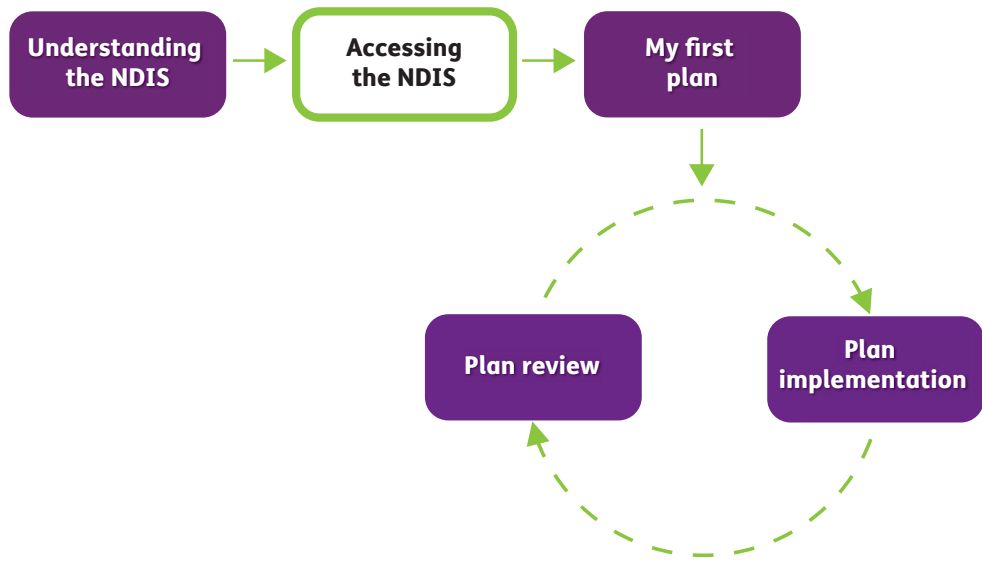
The NDIS can pay for supports that are reasonable and necessary for you. This means they are related to your disability and are required for you to live your life and achieve your goals. You can read more about reasonable and necessary supports on our website www.ndis.gov.au/participants.

The NDIS will be available to you as long as you need support to manage your disability.

Once you have a plan, it is generally in place for 12 months. If your needs change you can ask for it to be reviewed.

To learn more about the NDIS visit www.ndis.gov.au.

Everyone's needs and goals are different. That's why the NDIS provides participants with the flexibility to manage their support needs.



Accessing the NDIS

There are requirements you must meet to access the NDIS.

- **Age**
You must be under 65 years of age.
- **Residency**
You need to live in Australia and be an Australian citizen, or have paperwork that gives you permission to live here permanently.
- **Disability**
You need to have a disability that is likely to be with you for life and that substantially impacts how you manage everyday activities. This means you need help from other people or special equipment to do certain things.
- **Early intervention**
Early intervention helps people with a disability that is likely to be with them for life but could be improved by getting some additional support now.

Early intervention can also help children under six years old with developmental delay.

The focus of early intervention is on people getting services and supports now so they require less services and supports in the future and can live a more independent life.

If your child is under six years old find out more about early intervention on our website www.ndis.gov.au.

To access the NDIS, we'll need to know some information about you. Everyone will provide this information in different ways. You might be asked to fill in a form or tell someone over the phone.

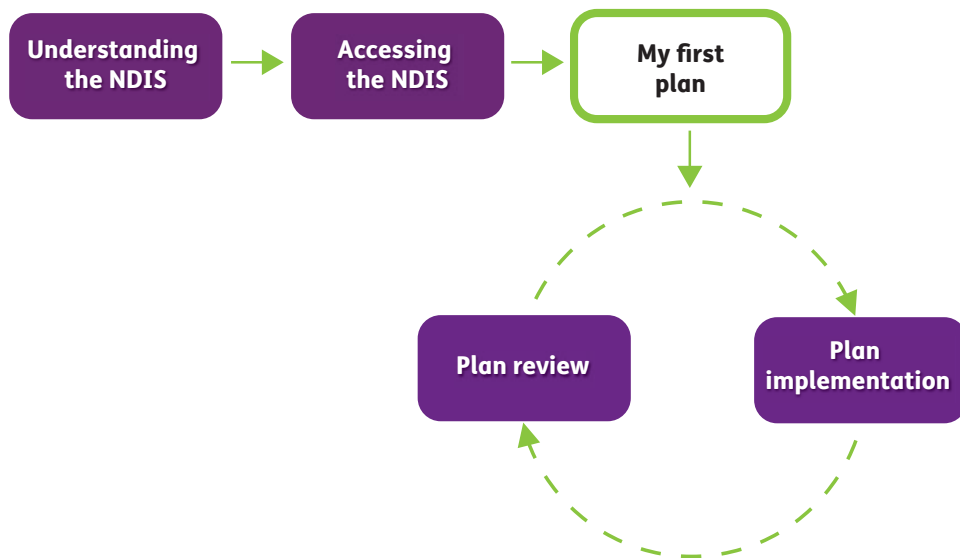
If you currently receive disability supports, your provider may be able to give us this information for you. If you are not currently receiving supports, you will need to contact us when the NDIS is available in your area.

Once we have this information, we will contact you to let you know if you are able to access the NDIS, and we will also tell you what the next steps are.

If you are not eligible, you may still be able to access some supports available in the community. You can find information about your options on our website www.ndis.gov.au/people-disability.

People who meet the NDIS access requirements are called participants.

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My First Plan

Your First Plan is the start of a lifelong relationship with the NDIS. The NDIS will support you over your lifetime.

Your First Plan with the NDIS will continue to give you the support you need now. It will make sure you have time to learn more about all of your options with the NDIS and consider your goals for your next plan.

Your First Plan may include the same supports and services you currently receive. It might include a range of supports provided by your family, friends, doctors, school and paid disability providers.

To create your First Plan you will meet with an NDIS partner or Local Area Coordinator (LAC) to have a conversation about your current situation and supports. This means we will ask you how you do everyday things like having a shower or cooking food.

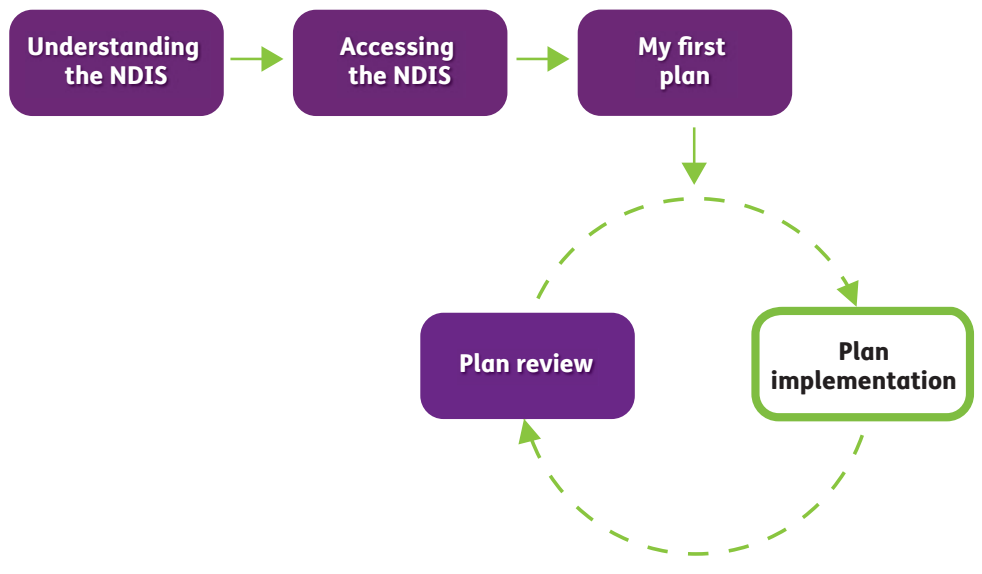
This information will form the basis of your First Plan. Until you have an NDIS plan in place, you will keep receiving your current supports.

Your plan may include:

- **Informal supports** – the care and help you get from your family and friends.
- **Community supports** – the activities and services available you can get from people or groups in your local community.
- **Mainstream supports** – the support and services you get from your doctor or school.
- **Reasonable and necessary funded supports** – the supports and services the NDIS can fund. These are things related to your disability that you need to live your life and increase your options such as getting a job or doing more activities in the community.

Your First Plan will be in place for 12 months. This will give you time to think about how those supports are working for you, and what else you might need to help you achieve your goals before you do your next plan.

It will also give you an opportunity to explore options for you to get involved in your local community through activities such as sports clubs, local theatres, special interest groups and community gardening.



Plan implementation

Once your plan is approved, it is time to put it into action. This is called plan implementation.

The NDIS will work with you to implement your plan. This support may include Local Area Coordinators (LAC) who help you find community activities and the mainstream services that help you achieve your goals.

Choosing your providers

You can choose the providers you want to deliver the services you need.

You will normally need to make a written agreement with your providers.

Self direction

The National Disability Insurance Agency can help you manage payments to your providers or you can manage these payments yourself.

You can get an information pack on self-directing and self-managing your plan on our website www.ndis.gov.au.

Participant Portal

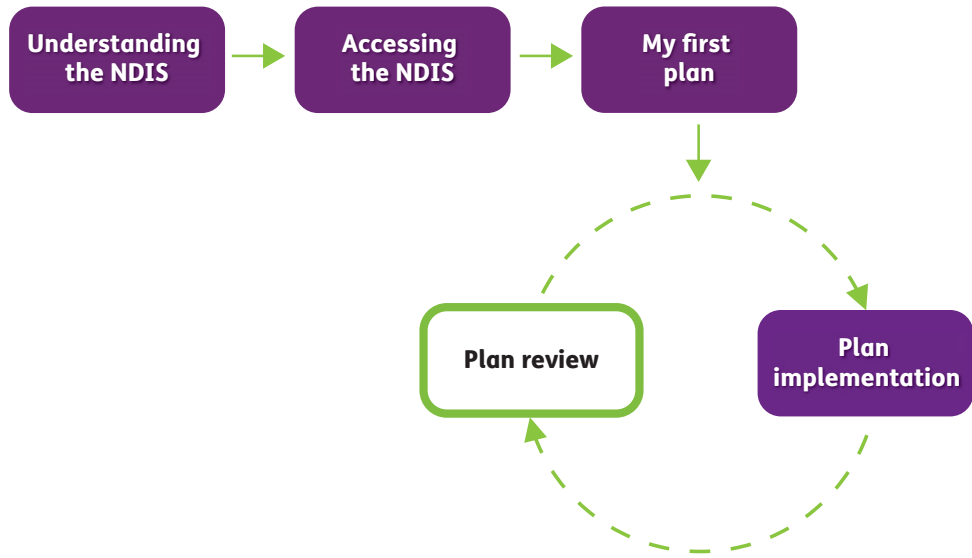
You can access your plan on the Participant Portal, an online tool that keeps all of your documents together. You will receive portal access instructions once your plan is ready. If you choose to self-manage your funding, you can also process payments through the portal.

Implementing your plan

While you are implementing your plan, you might like to:

- Think about your future goals.
- Consider activities and ways of achieving your goals.

It is important to think about how your first plan is working for you – what is good and what is not. This will help you prepare for your next plan at your plan review. The person helping you to implement your plan can also help you to do this.



Plan review

While everyone is different, your First Plan will generally be in place for 12 months before we work with you to make any changes. This is called a plan review.

Have a think about your goals in both the short and long term. Knowing what you would like to work towards will help you to think about the supports and services you may need to achieve those goals.

It is important your NDIS plan, and any funded supports, continue to work well for you. This means your plan is helping you to achieve your goals.

Before you start your plan review, it can also be helpful for you to explore options for you to get involved in your local community through activities such as sport clubs, local theatres, special interest groups and community gardening.

If your circumstances or needs change you can ask us to change your plan. You can also ask a family member, friend, carer or provider to support you during a plan review.

Getting plan ready checklist

The getting plan ready checklist helps you to get ready for making your next NDIS plan.

- Think about your life now and into the future, what supports are helping you and which are not.
- Identify your strengths, interests, opportunities and challenges.
- Consider your current informal, mainstream and community supports.
- Create words or pictures about your daily life and goals so that you are prepared for your plan review.

If you feel a support or service provider is not helping you as much as they could, you can change provider. You do not need to wait until your plan review. See 'choosing a provider' on our website for more information.



www.ndis.gov.au



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