

Navigating advocacy



Children and Young People
with Disability Australia



CYDAYouth

“Finding and using an independent advocate helped me to grow my self advocacy skills, understand the different options available for my case and took away a lot of stress and anxiety related to navigating the NDIS.” (Bell)

Advocates are here to support and guide you to make decisions about your life. They should have strong knowledge about the NDIS and can speak to the NDIA on your behalf, or help you self advocate. Advocates can be trusted friends, family members or a member of an individual advocacy organisation.



What are the most common types of advocacy?

- individual advocacy
- self advocacy
- family advocacy
- legal advocacy



Individual advocacy is when a young person with a disability works one-on-one with an advocate. They give you support and help you find solutions. They can speak to the NDIA on your behalf and support you to self advocate.



Self advocacy means speaking up for yourself, sharing your experiences and communicating your needs and wants. You are in charge of the choices and decisions you make. You are the expert of your own lived experience, so it is important that your choices are respected and understood.





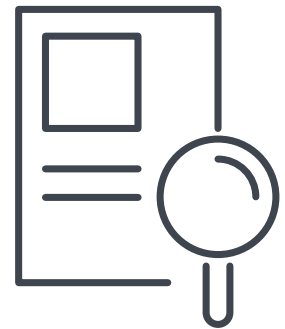
Family advocacy is when a family member acts as a representative for a young person with disability. They advocate for them to live their best life and participate equally in their community. Family advocacy works best when the family member knows the young person with disability very well, to communicate their wants and needs effectively.



Legal advocacy is when a professional lawyer gives legal advice to help young people with disability. The lawyer/advocate can support and guide you to navigate the legal system, help you understand your legal rights and protect you from discrimination, abuse or neglect.

What to look for in an advocate:

- they help you build skills in communication and confidence
- they understand the NDIS system
- they help guide and encourage you
- they respect your choices and autonomy
- they help you create and achieve goals
- they offer solutions to issues you may have with the NDIA
- they check on your wellbeing.



Questions to ask your advocate:

- How can I make the NDIA understand my wants and needs?
- The NDIA made a decision I don't agree with, can I appeal their decision?
- How will you support me to advocate for myself to the NDIA?
- What evidence do I need to provide to the NDIA?
- What are the steps to review and appeal a decision from the NDIA?



Setting goals with your advocate:

- appeal a decision the NDIA have made
- make sure your NDIS plan supports your wants and needs
- gather evidence needed for an upcoming plan review
- submit evidence to the NDIA.

Setting small goals can help you achieve a bigger goal, and your advocate can work with you to achieve them.

Setting boundaries:

- I don't feel comfortable talking about this, I want to stop.
- I respect your opinion, but I have a right to my own opinion.
- I don't want to problem-solve right now, I want to be understood.
- Only contact me at this time through this communication method.



Building relationships can take time. It's important to create boundaries and practice self care when we talk about things that are upsetting or triggering.

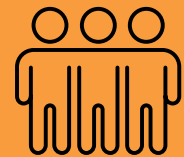
If you feel overwhelmed, you can practice self care. This means doing something you enjoy, like playing video games, going outside for some fresh air, chatting with friends or family members, reading or listening to a book, and making time to rest.



Where to find an advocate:

Disability Advocacy Network Australia

Disability Advocacy Resource Unit



This is your life and your NDIS plan. You have the right to choose what supports you need and deserve as a young person with disability, and it is important that you feel empowered, respected and supported every step of the way.



Mental health support

Learning new NDIS terms can be stressful. If you are feeling overwhelmed or confused, please reach out to someone you trust. It's okay to ask for help. Below are some organisations that provide free mental health support.

- Lifeline 13 11 14
www.lifeline.org.au
- Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au
- QLife 1800 184 527
www.qlife.org.au
- Women with Disabilities Australia 0438 535 123
www.wwda.org.au

For a longer list of NDIS terms, please visit the NDIS website:
www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/glossary



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Disclaimer: CYDA's In Control My Way resources have been created to support families of children and young people with disability to help manage their NDIS plans. Information provided is intended as a general guide and may not contain the most recent information and updates. CYDA is not responsible for decisions made by the NDIA or its partners in the community. For the most current information on the NDIS, refer to the NDIS website. These fact sheets are current as of June 2023. View the full set of In Control My Way resources at: **www.cyda.org.au** .