



Understanding NDIS language

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) provides supports to people with disability. It can be complex and sometimes feels like it has its own language.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has its own glossary and resources to help you understand the words they use. [You can find the NDIS Glossary here.](#)

This fact sheet explains some NDIS terms that might be useful for:

- parents and/or caregivers of children or young people with disability
- representatives of children or young people with disability
- anyone supporting children or young people with disability around decision-making and the NDIS

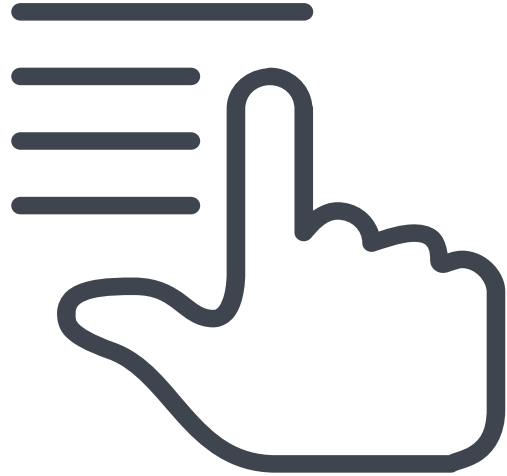
The information in this fact sheet might also be useful for young people with disability. [We also have resources about the NDIS made specifically for young people with disability which you can find here.](#)





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Understanding the language of the NDIS

Introduction

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has developed a lot of its own language to describe the services it provides and the way the NDIS works.

It is important to understand the language of the NDIS when making decisions about a child or young person's NDIS funding and learning about the services they might use.

It's also good to remember that the NDIA sometimes works with other services. These might include health or education services. The NDIS uses many words and terms in a way that is unique to the NDIS. Other services may use different words to describe the same things.

NDIS language and processes can change

The NDIS is always growing and changing. Sometimes, the NDIA will change their processes and the words they use to talk about the NDIS. This guide is current as of September 2024. [For the most up-to-date language, you can check the NDIS website here.](#)

Acronyms and abbreviations

The NDIA use a lot of acronyms and abbreviations when they talk about the NDIS. We have included some of them in this fact sheet. The NDIA have a longer list of useful acronyms on their website. [You can view the full list of NDIS acronyms here.](#)





Terms about people and organisations

National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA): The NDIS is delivered by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). The NDIA grants funding and decides how the NDIS will be delivered.

Participant: Participants are people with disability who have met the access criteria for the NDIS and have been accepted onto the scheme.

Plan nominee: A plan nominee is a person who is appointed to act or make decisions for an NDIS participant. This may happen if a participant is under 18. It might also happen if a participant needs help to make decisions due to their disability.

Early Childhood partners: Early Childhood partners are local organisations who are funded by the NDIA to work with families of children under nine years old. They can help you to find supports and services. An Early Childhood partner is not directly employed by the NDIA. The organisations who deliver these services may be different in each state.

Local Area Coordinator (LAC): A LAC's role is to help you access supports and services in your local community. This includes access to the NDIS and NDIS-funded supports. If you want to request access to the NDIS, you will need to contact a LAC.

LACs are employed by different organisations in each state. They are not employed directly by the NDIA. [The NDIA have a webpage where you can enter your postcode to find local services, including LACs, here.](#)

Support worker (SW): Support workers may provide support to a participant in many ways. This might include support with personal care, support to access the community, or developing independent skills. Some tasks may need a support worker to have extra training, like managing complex health conditions or managing medications. Support workers are paid to provide support and usually cannot be family members.

Service providers (providers): A provider is a person, business or organisation who delivers NDIS funded supports to participants. Providers have different areas of experience and expertise.



Terms about NDIS services and supports

Assistive technology (AT): Assistive technology is technology that can be used for disability related support. This might include technology that can help a disabled person with their communication or mobility. Assistive technology can help someone do things that are difficult or unsafe due to their disability.

Support coordinator: A support coordinator is a provider who can help participants to understand their NDIS plan and connect to supports and services in their local area. There are different levels of support coordination that might be funded as part of an NDIS participant's plan.

Short Term Accommodation (STA): Short Term Accommodation is temporary accommodation support for people with disability. STA can be taking a short break away from home. It is usually funded when your usual supports are unavailable, or you want to try something new. Sometimes, outside of the NDIS, STA can be referred to as 'respite'.

School Leaver Employment Support (SLES): School leaver employment support funding can help participants transition from school to work. Usually, the funding is available to a young person who is in their final years of school, or directly after they leave school. The funding may support people to prepare, look for, or gain employment. It is usually only funded for two years.

Complex support needs pathway: Some NDIS participants will be given access to the complex support needs pathway. This pathway is for participants facing complicated challenges in their lives. These challenges might be related to their disability, additional health or medical issues, mental health, or other social factors like homelessness or detention. The NDIA has specific guidelines to decide if a participant is eligible for a complex support pathway.

Functional capacity assessment: The NDIA uses assessments to understand the impact of a participant's disability on their life and how they function. A functional capacity assessment looks at areas like mobility, self-care, communication, social interaction and self-management. The assessment can be done by an allied health professional who will suggest the supports a person needs. Supports may include home modification, therapy, assistive technology or equipment, or ways to build capacity. The allied health professional will decide which assessment tool is most appropriate, based on age and disability.



Supported Independent Living (SIL): Supported Independent Living funding is for supports that help people with disability to live independently in their homes. SIL support is often provided on a 24/7 basis and may include support with personal care, daily life skills, and accessing the community.

Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA): For some NDIS participants, the NDIA will provide funding for SDA in their plan. SDA is specialist housing with supports made available on site. There are different types of SDA housing built to specific standards of accessibility and safety.

[For more information on SDA eligibility and requirements, see the NDIS Specialist Disability Accommodation page.](#)



Terms about plans, funding and reviews



NDIS plan: An NDIS plan will state a participant's goals, and how funding has been allocated to meet those goal. The funding is in three parts:

- **Core** – This funding helps participants with everyday activities, like accessing the community. This funding is usually used to pay for support workers, transport, low cost assistive technology, and everyday items related to a participant's disability.
- **Capacity building** – This is funding to build the skills and independence of a participant. These funds are usually used to pay for allied health and therapy supports or support coordination.
- **Capital** – This funding might cover home or car modifications. It may also include high-cost assistive technology or equipment.

Some parts of a plan may be flexible, and some may be fixed. This should be clearly stated on the plan.

An NDIS plan may be changed by:

- **Plan reassessment:** A plan reassessment may be initiated by the participant or their parent/caregiver, or by the NDIA. This may include a scheduled review at the end of a plan, or an unscheduled review. An unscheduled review may be initiated when there is a change in your situation, like where you live or starting a new job.
- **Plan variation:** Sometimes a plan can be changed without a full assessment. This might include changing some small details or extending the date of the plan.
- **Internal review of decision:** If you do not agree with the decisions made during a plan reassessment or plan variation, you can request an internal review. NDIA have more information on internal reviews on their website.





Other NDIS phrases

Choice and control: Choice and control is an important idea in the NDIS. The idea is that participants should have choice in, and control over, who supports them, the goals they want to set, and how they want to achieve them.

NDIS Supports: In August 2024, new legislation about the NDIS was passed by the Australian Parliament. The legislation says that what is and is not an NDIS support will be defined in lists developed by the NDIA. There may be exceptions made if an NDIS participant can show that an item not on the approved list is a more cost effective alternative to an item on the list. At the time this resource was published, the lists were in development with the NDIA.

Reasonable and necessary: Before the new legislation was passed, the NDIA used 'reasonable and necessary' as the criteria to decide what supports and services a participant should have in their NDIS plan. For a support to be 'reasonable and necessary', it had to be disability related, not a day-to-day expense, and represent 'value for money'.



Supported by

CYDA's In Control Our Way resources are supported by the Australian Government Department of Social Services and the NDIS.



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Disclaimer

CYDA's In Control Our Way resources have been created to support families of children and young people with disability to self-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 here.](#)

These fact sheets are current as of September 2024. [You can view the full set of In Control Our Way resources here.](#)