

Key Stats Snapshot 1: Children and Young People on the NDIS



The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plays a major role in supporting hundreds of thousands of children and young people with disability in Australia.

However, national data shows that children and young people continue to experience unmet support needs or unfair barriers to access.

Who's on the Scheme and why?

Children and young people make up a significant proportion of the NDIS, with a majority of participants being aged two to 17:



476,180 children and young people aged 24 and under currently receive NDIS support



67% of all new participants are aged under 15



Over half (**52%**) of all NDIS participants are under 18



Daily life, learning, and social activities are common goals for children **under seven**



Eligibility rates are highest for young applicants, including **98%** for under-sevens



For participants aged **19-24**, goals relate more to work.



Funding is used to support everything from learning and education, therapy and early intervention, and communication and daily living to social and community participation, health and wellbeing, and employment and post-school transitions.



From birth to when they start school, children show improvements across ALL areas receiving NDIS support.



For participants aged 15 and over, the greatest improvements are in choice and control, daily living, health and wellbeing, and social or community participation.

Unmet support needs

Despite their prevalence on the Scheme, many children and young people are still not receiving the supports they need:



More than four in five disabled children have unmet support needs



Unmet needs are up to 40% higher for children with cognitive, social, mental health, and self-care difficulties

Therapy, school-based support and support workers are the most common gaps:



51% have unmet therapy support needs



44% have unmet school-based support needs



36% have unmet support worker needs.

Exclusion from a child's plan was the leading reason these needs were unmet

Some groups face greater barriers



Barriers to accessing and using the NDIS are not experienced equally and can affect access to diagnosis, planning processes, funding supports, and ongoing service availability.



They are greater for low-income families, culturally diverse communities, regional and remote communities, girls and young women, and children with intellectual, cognitive or psychosocial disability.



Barriers may also be reflected in Scheme participation rates. For example, at age 6, 15% of participants are males compared with 7% of females. This mirrors diagnostic patterns, as autism and developmental delay are more commonly diagnosed in males.

Data gaps remain

Current national data does not fully capture the experiences of all children and young people with disability on the NDIS. Important gaps in understanding remain. These include the:

- Experiences of children and young people not eligible for the NDIS
- Quality and adequacy of supports
- Experiences of intersectional communities
- Long-term outcomes across key transition points.



Find out more

Explore CYDA's full Key Statistics Report for more in-depth data, analysis, and sources.

<https://cyda.org.au/key-statistics/>

NDIS data changes regularly as it is updated every three months through NDIS Quarterly Reports. This factsheet is based on Q3 data released in March 2026, while the Key Statistics Report is based on the latest available data when it was published in February 2026.