Social and recreation support

Quick summary: social and recreation activities are an important part of life for many people. You may be able to enjoy these activities independently, or with support from friends, family and the community. If you need extra help to participate in social and recreation activities because of your disability, we may be able to fund this. You'll still need to pay for the general costs of your social and recreation activities. This means you'll pay for things like membership, basic equipment or entrance fees. These are costs that everyone has to pay for.

Note: when we say disability support needs, we mean supports you need for the impairments that meet the disability or early intervention requirements, or both.

When we say 'your plan' we mean your NDIS plan. If you're looking for information about community connections, go to Our Guideline – Community connections.

If you're looking for information about your child's early connections, go to Our Guideline – Early connections.

What's on this page?

This page covers:

- What do we mean by social and recreation support?
- How do we decide if social and recreation supports meet the NDIS funding criteria?
- How do you get social and recreation supports in your plan?
- What happens once you have social and recreation support in your plan?

You might also be interested in:

- Work and study
- Transport
- Personal care
- Assistive technology

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What do we mean by social and recreation support?

How do we decide if social and recreation supports meet the NDIS funding criteria?

There are many different supports available to help you join in with social and recreation activities. We'll work with you to find the best way to get the NDIS supports you need because of your disability. We also know your support needs might change over time.

All supports we fund must meet the NDIS funding criteria. This includes that it's an NDIS support for you.

The questions below will help you think about whether we'll consider funding social and recreation NDIS supports for you.

Is the social or recreation support:

- an NDIS support for you?
- directly related to your disability support needs?
- helping you pursue your goals?
- value for money?
- effective and beneficial for you?
- legal and safe?
- something we expect family, friends or the community to provide?

Is the social and recreation support an NDIS support for you?

Social and recreation support will be an NDIS support for you if either:

- the Rules say that the support is an NDIS support for everyone, or
- the Rules say that the support is only for a specific group of people and you are part of that group.[14]

NDIS supports are the services, items and equipment that can be funded under the NDIS. Supports that should be funded by organisations or services outside of the NDIS aren't NDIS supports.

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Many local clubs and community organisations provide social and recreation activities you can join in with. If one of these services provides the type of help you need, you might not need NDIS funded supports.

Your my NDIS contact or support coordinator can help you connect to other organisations in the community. They can help you find information on what's available or help you develop the skills and confidence to connect with those services.

Example

Jo loves heavy metal and wants to go see some live music but needs some support to do this. Jo's local area coordinator suggests a community group that connects people with a disability to volunteers so that they can go and see bands together. Jo is connected with a volunteer who also loves heavy metal. The volunteer is the same age and lives close by. Now Jo and the volunteer are catching up every fortnight to see a band and they both enjoy the live gigs. Jo and the volunteer continue to learn just how Jo wants to be supported and they are planning some other activities together.

Reasonable adjustments

Community organisations, shops and sporting clubs must also take steps to remove barriers you may face because of your disability. This is to make sure you receive the same services as everyone else. We call this a 'reasonable adjustment'.[15]

Reasonable adjustments could be things like:

- physical access such as ramps and wide doorways[16]
- giving you the same opportunity to participate. For example, making changes to standard golfing competition rules to allow you to use a motorised buggy
- adapting to suit your communication needs, like using a flash instead of a noise to signal the start of a game or race.

Example

Adeem is a teenager who uses a wheelchair and loves robotics. Adeem is very keen to meet others who have the same interests. Adeem and his mum learn from their local area coordinator about a robotics group running at the local library every Tuesday after school. Adeem, his mum and local area coordinator talk about whether Adeem will need any extra NDIS supports to attend the group.

The library already has a ramp and accessible space. This is part of their reasonable adjustment to make sure all community members can access the library. Adeem will need extra NDIS support to get in and out of his wheelchair to test the robots on the floor. Adeem

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doesn't want his mum to stay with him during the robotics group. As a teenager, building independence can be very important. We could fund a support worker to help Adeem get up and down as needed during the robotics group.

For more information on reasonable adjustments check out the Australian Human Rights Commission website. You can also ask your my NDIS contact or support coordinator.

Is the social and recreation support related to your disability support needs?

We can only fund social and recreation supports if they're directly related to your disability support needs.[17] This means that you need the extra NDIS support to take part in the activity because of the effects of your disability.

We don't fund registration fees or standard equipment for social and recreation activities. You'll need to pay these costs yourself.[18]

Does the social and recreation support help you pursue your goals?

When we fund social and recreation supports, we need to know these NDIS supports will help you pursue the goals in your plan.[19]

For example, you might have a goal to make new friends and start a new hobby. The NDIS support we fund will need to help you pursue that goal.

Learn more about setting goals.

Is the social and recreation support value for money?

Your social and recreation supports must be value for money compared with the benefits for you, and compared with other supports that would achieve the same outcome.[20] We'll think about whether:

- there are NDIS supports that might achieve the same outcome that are less costly.[21] For example, you might be able to share NDIS supports, rather than needing individual supports
- your social and recreation supports will increase your independence, or reduce your support needs in future[22]
- the assistive technology or modified equipment you need could be hired or leased instead of purchased.[23]

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Is the social and recreation support effective and beneficial for you?

We need to check that the social and recreation supports we fund will be effective and beneficial for you.[24] We'll look at whether the NDIS supports will help you to participate in a social and recreation activity. This might be something that you haven't been able to do or has been difficult to participate in because of your disability. We also look at how effective the support has been for other people with the same type of needs as you.

Is the social and recreation support legal and safe to use?

We need to make sure the social and recreation support is safe and legal. We can't fund social and recreation supports if they're likely to cause harm to you or others.[25]

For example, before we fund adapted sporting equipment for you, we may ask an occupational therapist to check that the equipment is safe to use and won't hurt you or others.

Do we expect your family, friends or the community to provide the social and recreation support?

When we fund social and recreation supports, we think about the different supports family, friends and the community would provide at different ages and stages in your life.

For example, we would expect parents to help their children get to and from social and recreation activities.[26] But we don't expect parents to provide help for adults getting to and from social and recreation activities. This is because parents aren't usually expected to provide this level of help for their adult children.

What about children?

We'll consider if children need extra support because of their disability compared to other children the same age, and what is reasonable for family, friends and the community to provide.

We consider whether:[27]

- because of their disability, a child's support needs are much more than the needs of other children of the same age. This means the family needs to provide a lot more care than would normally be provided for a child of that age
- the NDIS support will help build the child's capacity
- the NDIS support will reduce any risks to a child's wellbeing
- the NDIS support will reduce any risks to family members or friends.

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Generally, we won't fund travel supports for children to get to and from social and recreation activities.[28] This is because families or guardians have a role in meeting their child's daily travel needs.[29]

Example

Debbie is 14 years old and loves dancing. Debbie has just started lessons at a new dance school but is finding it hard to understand the teacher's instructions. Debbie's dance lessons start at 7pm each Tuesday night. At age 14, we would generally expect Debbie's parents to provide transport for her. This is because parents would usually transport their child to nighttime dance lessons.

We wouldn't expect Debbie's family to support their 14-year-old daughter during the dance lesson. This is because parents don't usually provide support for their teenage children during the class. Instead, we might fund a support worker to help Debbie follow the teacher's instructions and explain her needs to the dance teacher.

What if you're an adult?

We know that getting support from your family, friends and the community can be important for you and your wellbeing. At times you may prefer to be independent and enjoy social and recreation activities without calling on friends or family to help you.

If you're an adult, we look at whether it's reasonable for your family, friends or the community to provide the extra help you need.

We'll think about:

- how much extra help you need and what type
- whether the activity is the kind of thing an adult would usually do without extra help from family or friends
- if your family, friends or the community provide the extra help, would it pose a risk to your wellbeing or to theirs
- whether support from your family, friends or the community would help you become less or more independent
- whether it's suitable for your family, friends or the community to provide this support. For example, they may not have the capacity to provide the support at the level you need.

Often, friends and family can and want to help. Their involvement can be an important part of enjoying social and recreation activities. Paid NDIS supports can't, and are not intended to,

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replace the support that it's reasonable for family, friends and other community networks to provide.

Example

Nadine enjoyed yoga as a teenager and used to attend with her sister. Since Nadine's diagnosis of a psychosocial disability, she has wanted to stay at home and not go back to the yoga centre due to feelings of anxiety and isolation, which result from her disability. She's lacked the confidence to go almost anywhere on her own. Nadine's sister tried to encourage her back to yoga but wasn't able to attend the centre with her.

We fund a support worker to support Nadine to return to yoga classes. The support worker helped her become familiar again with the yoga centre and the instructors, find the right clothes to wear, and attend classes. After a few weeks of NDIS support to get to know others at yoga, Nadine connected with a person who also attended on their own. Nadine was able to attend yoga without her sister or the support worker and now goes twice a week with her new yoga buddy.

How do you get social and recreation supports in your plan?

To get social and recreation NDIS supports in your plan, you need to give us evidence that helps us understand the disability-related supports you need. Talk to your my NDIS contact or support coordinator to work out what evidence we need. Learn more about the evidence we need before we create or change your plan.

You can give us any new information or evidence about your support needs when you get it or any time we talk with you.

We'll need to understand the support you need for your disability and the barriers you're facing to participate in a social and recreation activity. We'll look at the information we have about your support needs and decide on what NDIS supports to include in your plan. This may include reports from an allied health professional or psychologist which detail the support you need to take part in social and recreation activities.

Social and recreation support always needs to meet the NDIS funding criteria before we can include it in your plan. We'll think about who is best to provide the social and recreation support and, if needed, help you find a service or organisation.

You should think about how you may be able to use your NDIS supports flexibly for different social and recreation activities. You may already have funding in your plan that you can use for social and recreation supports.

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You can talk to your support coordinator or your my NDIS contact about this at any time.

What happens once you have social and recreation support in your plan?

Once we've approved your plan, you can start using your NDIS supports for social and recreation activities. Talk to your support coordinator or my NDIS contact for more information.

We fund most social and recreation supports in your Core budget. If we fund assistive technology for your social and recreation supports, you'll find this funding in your Capital budget. Learn more about using your budget.

If your needs change and you don't have enough funding in your plan, you should talk to us. You might be able to use your Core budget flexibly or you might need a change to your plan. Learn more about changing your plan.

What if you don't agree with our decision?

If we decide social and recreation supports don't meet our NDIS funding criteria, we can't include them in your plan.

We'll give you written reasons why we made the decision. You can contact us if you'd like more detail about the reasons for our decision.

If you don't agree with a decision we make about social and recreation supports, you can ask for an internal review of our decision.[30]

You'll need to ask for an internal review within 3 months of getting your plan.[31]

Learn more about reviewing our decisions.

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Reference List

[1] NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 2 item 4(h), (q) (r).
[2] NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 1 item 27.
[3] NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 2 item 4(r).
[4] NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 1 item 27(a).
[5] NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 1 item 7.
[6] NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 1 item 27(b).
[7] NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 1 item 27(a).
[8] NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 1 item 6(a).
[9] NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 2 item 4(h), (q), (r).
[10] NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 2 item 4(g), (h), (p), (r).
[11] NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 2 item 4(i).
[12] NDIS Act s34(1)(e); NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 2 item 6(g).
[13] NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 2 item 4(i).
[14] NDIS Act s34(1)(f).
[15] Discrimination Act 1992 (Ch), ss 5 and 6.
[16] NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 2 item 19(c).
[17] NDIS Act s34(1)(aa); NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules rule 5.1(b).
[18] NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 2 item 4(h), (q), (r).
[19] NDIS Act s34(1)(a).
[20] NDIS Act s34(1)(c).
[21] NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.1(a).
[22] NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.1(c), (f).
[23] NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.1(d).
[24] NDIS Act s34(1)(d).
[25] NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 5.1(a).
[26] NDIS Act s34(1)(e); NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.4(a); NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 2 item 6(g).
[27] NDIS Act s34(1)(e) NDIS (Supports for Participants) Rules r 3.4(a).
[28] NDIS (Getting the NDIS Back on Track No. 1) (NDIS Supports) Transitional Rules 2024 sch 2 item 6(g).
[29] OG - Including Specific Types of Supports in Plans Operational Guideline – Section 12.
[30] NDIS Act s 100.
[31] NDIS Act s 100(2).

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