

SOURCEKIDS

ISSUE 04

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
Leap in!

UNDERSTANDING GOALS

A GUIDE TO
ACHIEVING THE
BEST OUTCOMES
FOR YOUR CHILD
OR YOUNG ADULT'S
NDIS PLAN



INSIDE GUIDE 4

Types of goals

Goal-setting tips for
different life stages

Where to get help



SOURCEKIDS magazine

Welcome

Goal setting for the NDIS can be a daunting task for many. How do you go about writing goals, what kind of goals should you be creating, how do you match outcomes and supports to these and what happens if they change along the way? There is so much to think about for parents, carers and individuals living with disability when it comes to setting goals.

We've partnered up with Leap in! to create this easy-to-follow guide all about NDIS goals. We work through the basics of goal setting and the types of goals that can go into a plan. There are also some helpful examples that may apply in your circumstance.

We delve into goal setting for different life stages including early childhood, school-aged children, teenagers and young adults and for further education and work, because we know that goals are vastly different across these different stages and need to be adapted along the way.

Finally, we look at where to get help with goal setting if you are struggling, what to do if your child's goals change and how to track, celebrate and review goals.

We hope this guide helps you with you, or your loved one's goals, whatever stage you are at and gives you confidence when tackling this important NDIS process.

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A message from Leap in!

If you're reading this special edition eMag, then more than likely you've had first hand experience (or are about to) with the NDIS, goals and goal planning.

You'll also understand how important and sometimes confusing NDIS goal setting can be.

Setting goals is a fundamental part of accessing, implementing and utilising your child's NDIS funds. Working towards goals provides direction, purpose and a clear destination.

Leap in! Brand Ambassador, Dr Dinesh Palipana OAM recently shared his thoughts on the importance of goals.

"Life is never a straight line. Sometimes you have to change your sails and start heading in a different direction. Other times you have to draw on different strengths to meet a challenge. Goals give us structure, a way to build on our strengths and help us stay in control of our choices."

Whether your child is aiming to achieve small goals, short-term goals, life-changing goals or anything in between, this eMag is designed to help. Drawing on our experiences of working with thousands of children with disabilities and their families, it pulls together information and strategies to help you navigate the special world of goals setting and implementation.

I'm proud to work once again with our friends at Source Kids to develop this eMag: *Understanding Goals: A guide to achieving the best outcomes for your child or young adult's NDIS Plan*. It's the fourth eMag in our series of insightful resources that we have developed together and probably my favourite so far.

Warm regards,

Andrew Kiel

CO-FOUNDER & CEO
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GOALS & THE NDIS

An overview

What exactly are goals? Why does the NDIS need them? How do they fit into the whole planning process? If you're new to the NDIS (and even if you're not!) it can all feel quite overwhelming, but along with the good folks at Leap in!, we're here to help.



Setting goals can be a wonderful way to stay motivated and focused, especially when you're busy or have multiple responsibilities to juggle. Goals provide direction and can give you and your child, tween or teen a sense of purpose.

A goal is simply:

- Something your child wants to achieve
- A target they are working hard to reach
- An objective you and your child are willing to work towards.

Think of goals as building blocks. Just like stacking smaller blocks to build something bigger, each small goal achieved forms the foundation for the next goal. It's all about making progress one step at a time.

Setting goals is an essential part of

this process. Your child's NDIS Plan will include at least one goal as well as the steps, supports and services that will help your child along the way.

WHY DO GOALS MATTER?

- 1 They can help your child (and you!) to stay motivated.**
- 2 They can boost confidence.**
- 3 Having goals can help you make better choices.**
- 4 There's nothing like a clearly defined goal to set a challenge.**
- 5 Measure progress (and reward achievement).**

Reasonable and necessary explained

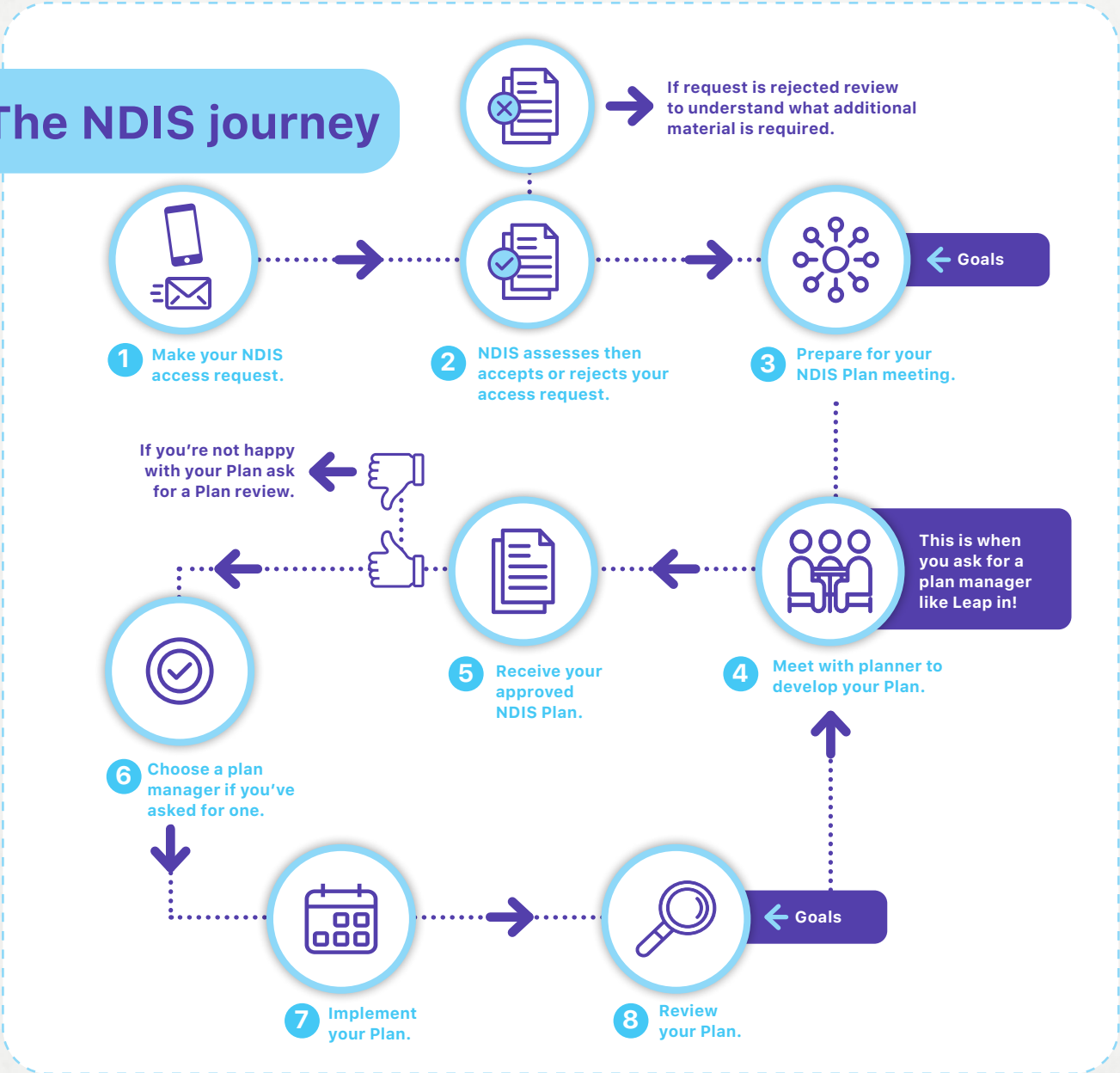
Every support purchased with NDIS funds must meet the 'reasonable and necessary' criteria used by the NDIS. Simply put, reasonable is something that is fair and necessary is something you need because of your disability.

To be considered reasonable and necessary a support must:

- Be related to your disability needs
- Help you pursue your goals
- Be value for money
- Be likely to be effective and beneficial
- Complement (not replace) other informal and formal supports
- Be the responsibility of the NDIS to fund
- Aim to improve your economic and social participation (like social activities, work or study).

For more information, visit [Reasonable and necessary: What it means plus a handy checklist.](#)

The NDIS journey



GOALS AND YOUR CHILD'S NDIS PLAN

Goals give the NDIS information about what's important to your child and family, and what they want to achieve.

Goals and your child's first NDIS Plan: Once a child's NDIS access request is accepted, you'll begin to prepare for their first NDIS plan meeting. This is where the NDIS gathers information about your child and family, the child's goals and any current supports to determine what to fund in their first NDIS Plan.

Goals and plan reassessments: If your child already has an NDIS Plan,

reviewing their goals and existing supports is part of preparing for a plan reassessment (when they get a new plan).

The better prepared you are going into an NDIS plan meeting or plan reassessment, the higher the chances your child will get the right supports for their needs.

To get started, think about how disability impacts daily life. For example:

- How disability impacts their interactions with others
- How they communicate their needs
- If they need support with daily tasks
- Any activities they want to do but are unable

- Whether they're able to see family or friends
- If they can do the things they want to do.

We recommend thinking about their strengths as well as needs. How can they draw on their strengths to help achieve those goals? This information is helpful in the NDIS planning process. 📌



DID YOU KNOW

Leap in! offers free pre-planning sessions to help you get organised for your NDIS plan meeting? Email crew@leapin.com.au to book in your session.

Need help to make sense of your NDIS Plan?



Book your **FREE**
Understand Your
NDIS Plan Session
with Australia's
leading NDIS plan
manager!

In your session we'll:

- help you understand the funding in your NDIS Plan
- explain all the budget categories
- discuss the kinds of supports you can use
- share tips and tricks about how the NDIS works.

It doesn't matter if you're self-managed, NDIA-managed or with another plan manager!

It's so easy – use our online form to register your interest and we'll call you to arrange a time. Or, call us on 1300 05 78 78 to book in today.

We're proud to partner with
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Leap in!

Visit leapin.com.au

Call us on 1300 05 78 78

Types of goals

Before you get into the task of goal setting it's useful to think about the types of goals that can go into a plan.

The type of goal and the length of time needed to achieve it depends on a person's age and many other factors. Shorter-term goals are often the focus for young children as their objectives and support needs can change quickly. Older children or teenagers may suit a combination of short-term and medium or longer-term goals.

SHORT-TERM GOALS (under 12 months)

Short-term goals help your child make progress and build momentum. They may be achieved within the period of an NDIS Plan such as six or 12 months. An example of a short-term goal is: "This year I want to get stronger and improve coordination so I can feed myself."

MEDIUM OR LONGER-TERM GOALS (12 months to 3 years)

Medium to long-term goals provide a sense of direction and guide actions over a longer period. Breaking larger goals into short-term goals makes them feel more achievable. An example of a longer-term goal is: "I want to build confidence and independence so I can catch the bus to school on my own."

SMART GOALS

Not sure where to start with goal setting? The SMART goals process is helpful for NDIS goal setting as it provides a structure that's easy to follow. SMART goals have five characteristics – they should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

SPECIFIC: Clearly define the goal and focus on the desired outcome.

For example: I want to increase my mobility by becoming stronger and fitter and improving my balance.

MEASURABLE: Establish concrete criteria to track progress. This makes it more meaningful and motivational.

For example: I will work with my speech therapist twice a week for three months to increase the number of words I can say.

ACHIEVABLE: Set goals that are realistic and attainable.

For example: I want to develop skills to use a communication device on my own within six months.

RELEVANT: Align your goals with your interests, needs and aspirations.

For example: I will participate in a sports program to improve fitness and social connections.

TIME-BOUND: Set a specific timeframe for accomplishing the goal.

For example: I'm going to attend a youth camp within six months to build independence and make new friends.



Common themes for NDIS goals

NDIS participants set a wide range of goals based on their unique needs and aspirations. Here are common goal themes for children:

IMPROVED DAILY LIVING SKILLS:

- Therapies like occupational therapy, speech therapy or physical therapy to help children develop essential skills for daily living.
- Developing self care skills like washing and dressing.
- Feeding skills for children who have difficulty eating, drinking and swallowing.

INCREASED MOBILITY AND INDEPENDENCE:

- Learning to use mobility aids or assistive devices.
- Gaining skills for using public transport.
- Physical therapy to improve strength, coordination and mobility.

ENHANCED COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION:

- Joining community groups, day-care or other activities.
- Developing social skills to build and maintain friendships.
- Participating in recreational activities and events.

IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLBEING:

- Physical fitness programs.
- Disability-related nutrition and dietary support.
- Physiotherapy or occupational therapy to manage disability support needs.


SCHOOL READINESS SKILLS:

- Improving fine motor skills, attention, and concentration.
- Assistance integrating children into mainstream schools or finding specialised schools.
- Accessing learning support services.

LIVING OPTIONS:

- Making the home environment more accessible through modifications.
- In-home support services.
- Respite care.

NAVIGATING THE NDIS:

- Plan management to help you manage your child's NDIS funds.
- Understanding and managing NDIS funding and budgets.
- Support coordination to build confidence and skills to use their supports. 



TURN THE PAGE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON GOAL SETTING.

An introduction to goal setting

It's good to know there's a link between what's important to you and your child, their goals and the supports the NDIS may fund for achieving them. With these elements in mind, the easiest way to approach goals is to break them down into the following four steps.

STEP 1 THINK ABOUT WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOUR CHILD.

When considering what's important, think about what skills they need to develop or what they would like to try. Reflect on their values, aspirations and how their life may look in the future.

For example, when thinking about setting goals for their NDIS Plan, some things that may be important might be:

- "I like doing craft activities at my local playgroup."
- "I want to improve how I communicate so I can chat about sports with my friends."

STEP 2 WORK OUT YOUR GOALS.

Once you decide what's important, think about specific activities or skills your child might like to improve on or achieve.

For example:

- If participating in local community activities is important to them, their plan might say "To increase my ability to attend community activities to make friends with other children my age."
- If improving their communication skills is an important early intervention step, you might say "To improve my ability to speak clearly by working with a speech therapist once a week."

STEP 3 BREAK EACH GOAL DOWN INTO STEPS.

One step at a time! Breaking down goals into individual steps makes achieving them so much easier. The NDIS goal-setting process allows for four steps for each goal. These steps become an action plan and a roadmap to guide progress.

For example, to increase your child's ability to access the community:

1. Research and find some community activities where there are children the same age.
2. Do a trial of two or three activities to see what your child enjoys and whether they feel welcome.
3. Book in for a term or program.
4. Organise a support worker to attend with the child if their disability means they need additional help with things like feeding and toileting.

STEP 4 WRITE DOWN THE SUPPORTS NEEDED.

Consider the challenges your child faces and the types of support that might help them to achieve their goals. Supports may be a combination of things the NDIS may fund and those provided by the community, your family or another organisation.

For example:

- Occupational therapy to build my muscle strength and coordination so I can learn to dress myself
- A support worker to help manage my feeding and toileting needs while participating in activities at the local community centre.

TOP TIP

The NDIS will record your child's goals and the accompanying steps in your own (or your child's) words. Your goals will then appear in the participant statement of their NDIS Plan.

Tips



1

Be realistic. It's easier to stay motivated when goals are achievable.

2

Include a timeframe for achieving each goal.

3

Set goals that connect with your child's interests and strengths.

4

Break goals into smaller, achievable steps.

5

Reach out to friends, family or support workers for input and practical help.

6

It's okay to be flexible and adjust goals as circumstances change.

7

Use the Leap in! app to help you keep all goal information in one place and in a format that's ready for your child's NDIS plan meeting or plan reassessment.

GOOD TO KNOW

- * There is no limit to the number of goals in an NDIS Plan. Each goal can include up to four steps.
- * Setting a goal or providing details about a support you might want in your child's plan doesn't mean the NDIS must give you the funding.
- * Setting a bigger or more expensive goal doesn't mean the NDIS will fund it. The reasonable and necessary test applies.
- * Your child and family may need support from both the NDIS and other supports and services to help you achieve your goals - such as family and friends, and mainstream or community services.
- * A plan reassessment happens at the end of each NDIS Plan. Supports can be added or removed as needs and goals change over time.
- * Your child's goal or goals will be included in their participant statement as part of their NDIS Plan.

Tips for getting NDIS goals funded

Be clear and specific: Ensure goals are well-defined, specific and aligned with the NDIS eligibility criteria. Be clear on the outcomes you want to achieve and how each support will benefit your child.

Provide relevant evidence: Back up goals with medical reports, assessments, or professional recommendations.

Understand each funding category:


Familiarise yourself with NDIS budget categories and the supports covered under each. Ensure goals fall within the appropriate category to maximise the chances of approval.

Work with a support coordinator or early childhood planner: Their expertise can help you navigate the NDIS process and provide support with goal setting.

Be prepared for planning meetings: Prioritise and communicate goals clearly and prepare examples

of supports that can help your child achieve each goal.

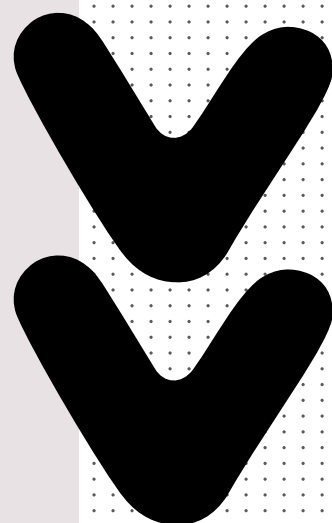
Explore alternative options: If your initial request for funding is not approved, explore other options, such as Capacity Building funding or support from other government schemes.

Seek advocacy support if needed: If you have difficulties with getting your child's goals funded, consider seeking advocacy support from disability advocacy organisations or support groups. 



GOAL SETTING & LIFE STAGES

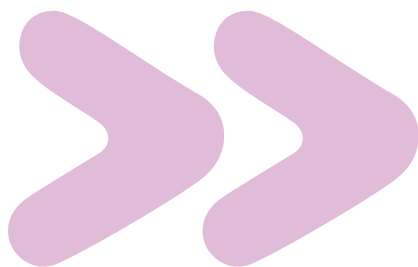
Over the next few pages we've broken down goals into the different life stages you may be at with your child. As your child develops and changes over the years so will the things they want to achieve and the supports they will require.





Goal setting for

EARLY CHILDHOOD



The national early childhood approach (ECA) provides support to ensure children with developmental delay or disability get the best possible start in life. Here, we provide a brief overview of the ECA under the NDIS and the role of goal setting at this stage of life. We also explore the process of transitioning from the ECA to the NDIS in a way that maintains your child's progress towards their goals.

Tips for early childhood

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD APPROACH

The NDIS early childhood approach is a nationally consistent approach for children with developmental delay or disability. It provides specialised support and services that promote development, support the well-being of the family and child, and help the child participate in the community.

Until recently, the ECA was available for children aged younger than seven. From July 2023, the NDIS expanded the age range to include children under the age of nine. This transition will take place over two years.

- Children who are already NDIS participants and turn seven after 1 July 2023 will remain with their early childhood partner until they turn nine if they require support up to this age.
- Children who are currently NDIS participants and who turned seven before 1 July 2023 will follow the existing process of transitioning to a local area coordinator (LAC).
- Children under the age of nine with a permanent disability who are new to the NDIS will be supported by an early childhood partner.

WORKING WITH AN EARLY CHILDHOOD PARTNER

Early childhood partners (ECPs) are local organisations funded by the NDIS to deliver the early childhood approach. They have experience and clinical expertise working with young children with developmental delays or disability and their families.

They can:

- Provide information about supports in your community
- Connect you to early intervention, mainstream and community services
- Use observation and assessment, along with parent input, to understand the impact of the child's delay or disability
- Identify if your child will benefit from short-term early intervention and if so, provide appropriate initial supports
- Identify any long-term specialised support needs and help you request access to the NDIS if required
- Monitor your child's progress.

An early childhood partner understands the unique needs of children and works with the family to set goals based on your child's strengths and challenges.

This could include improving communication, building social skills or learning daily living tasks. The ECP will provide strategies and resources to help the child make progress and reach important milestones.

EARLY CONNECTIONS

Support is available for children younger than seven with delays in their development or disability, and for their families and carers. It's called early connections and is delivered by the NDIS through ECPs.

Early connections are not the same as being on the NDIS. Children do not have to be eligible for the NDIS to access early connections. Early connections are available for a wider range of children in the community regardless of citizenship or visa status.

1

Start with small, achievable goals

2

Consider the child's unique abilities and challenges

3

Involve the child in goal setting where possible

4

Include short and long-term goals

5

Collaborate with professionals

6

Track and monitor progress


7

Connect with an ECP and join therapy waitlists as soon as possible.

You can search for an early childhood partner on the NDIS website. If there are none in your area, speak with your doctor or health professional, or contact your nearest NDIA office.

TRANSITIONING FROM ECA TO THE NDIS

If a child is eligible for the NDIS, an ECP can help their family complete an NDIS access request. Keep in mind that while a diagnosis is not required for the ECA, the NDIS requires a diagnosis and evidence of significant and permanent disability. Assessments should also be completed before submitting an NDIS access request.

A child's first NDIS Plan is often quite simple and for a shorter period of time (around 6-12 months). This allows for earlier review to ensure they're getting the right support. 

TOP TIP

You do not have to apply for the NDIS to access supports under the early childhood approach. Some children and their families can access early connections and supports outside of the NDIS. Others will be assisted to apply for the NDIS, depending on individual needs. Children do not need a diagnosis to get help under the ECA.

Stronger together.





Dinesh Palipana has joined Leap in! as our first Brand Ambassador.

Dinesh is a passionate advocate for the rights of people with disability and he is a big believer in setting goals and going after them.

The former Queenslanders of the Year is an emergency department doctor, lawyer and author. Dinesh believes disability is no barrier to achieving amazing things.

Stronger together.

This means a lot to us.

We're excited about our plans for working with Dinesh and what we can achieve together.

It speaks to our belief in plan management and how we support our Members every day to help them navigate the NDIS with confidence, getting the most from their NDIS Plans.

It captures the essence of our partnership with Source Kids and the great work we do together for parents and carers of kids with disability.

And it reflects the strength of the disability community when we come together on common goals.

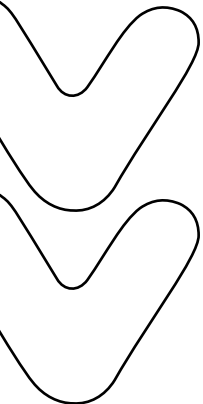
Pictured is Dinesh (centre front) surrounded by some of our Leap in! Crew.

Leap in!

**Visit leapin.com.au
Call us on 1300 05 78 78**

Goal setting for

SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN



Setting goals during their school years is a powerful way to support your child to thrive academically, socially and emotionally. By working together, parents and children can create a roadmap for success that fosters growth, builds confidence and maximises their potential. In this article, we provide practical guidance for parents to set and achieve meaningful goals with their kids.

NDIS SUPPORTS FOR SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

For children who have transitioned to the NDIS, it's helpful to have a clear understanding of the supports funded by the NDIS to align with goals.

- Therapy supports such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and behaviour support.
- Specialised transport required because of a student's disability.
- Training for teachers and other staff about the personal support needs of a student with disability.
- Funding for assistive technology devices and equipment.
- Social and community participation supports that provide an opportunity for children to make friends and connect with others.
- Capacity building activities to help the child learn new skills and become more independent.

- Assistance with personal care such as dressing, grooming, toileting and overnight care.
- Additional self-care at school related to the student's disability.
- Respite care offering temporary relief and support for caregivers. Respite is also a useful tool for giving your child a change of scenery or an opportunity to learn new skills in a different environment.

Personal care in schools

If your child is school-aged, their NDIS Plan may include the item "Personal care in schools". This acknowledges that the child receives personal care supports at school paid for by the relevant state or territory government. The funds do not come from your child's NDIS Plan.

The school organises and is responsible for delivering this service including how much support the child receives in the classroom. *Source: NDIS*

Tips for school-aged children

- 1** Focus on strengths and interests. This can help keep them motivated and engaged. For example, if a child enjoys music, set a goal related to music therapy or learning a musical instrument.
- 2** Prioritise functional goals. Consider goals that will have a practical impact on the child's daily life and education. For example, if the child struggles with handwriting, a functional goal might be to improve handwriting legibility for completing school work independently.
- 3** Foster a supportive environment. Emphasise effort, growth and resilience rather than focusing on outcomes. Encourage the child to learn from setbacks.
- 4** Work collaboratively with teachers. Expertise and insights from educators and therapists can help you and your child set suitable goals in their NDIS Plan.
- 5** Promote self-advocacy. Encourage the child to advocate for themselves by expressing their needs, preferences and goals.
- 6** Consider long-term goals. While initial NDIS Plans may be more focused on a child's immediate needs, it's important to consider and set long-term goals as immediate support needs are met to provide motivation and direction.

Goal setting during this time can also assist in preparation for major transitions, such as moving to a new grade, changing schools, or moving house.

TOP TIP

The NDIS is designed to provide supports and services that are not funded by other mainstream or government services (including school programs). The NDIS does not fund school fees, uniforms, supports that assist with education or school work, everyday supplies that all students use such as pens and textbooks, school excursions or activities. 📌



Goal setting for

TEENAGERS & YOUNG ADULTS

Tips for teenagers & young adults

Actively participating in shaping their own path and having a say in their educational journey can build self-esteem and independence for young people. The following tips may help young people to build confidence in goal setting.

- 1 Set realistic and meaningful goals. Setting goals that are challenging, yet achievable can help them stay motivated.
- 2 Include long-term goals. Working towards long-term goals requires planning and decision-making which are valuable skills to develop.
- 3 Align goals with major milestones and transitions. For example, focus on further education, training, employment, independent living and community participation. This can reveal areas they may want to focus on developing new skills.
- 4 Identify their strengths and how these can be used to overcome barriers or weaknesses.
- 5 Reassure them that it's okay to change goals! Goals should be refined or adapted as situations, priorities or aspirations change.
- 6 Encourage them to learn from past experiences. Reflect together on what worked well and apply those lessons to set new goals more effectively. Challenges or setbacks can be valuable learning opportunities. 🎯

When it comes to goal setting for teenagers and young adults with disabilities, the focus shifts towards preparing for adulthood, independence and a successful transition into post-school life.

There's so much to think about at this time of life. Setting goals allows young people to have a sense of control over their lives and their future.

Read on for information on how parents and carers can help set teenagers and young adults up for independent decision making. We also explore the role of goals (and the NDIS) in supporting preparation for some of life's biggest transitions.

NDIS SUPPORTS FOR TEENAGERS AND YOUNG ADULTS

Along with other reasonable and necessary supports, the NDIS may fund specific activities and services that are relevant to the teenage years.

- **Developing independent living skills.** Goals may focus on skills such as activities of daily living like cooking, personal care, managing finances and travelling independently.
- **Building vocational skills.** Goals may involve vocational training, internships or work experience programs to enhance employability and career development.
- **Accessing further education:** Goals can include researching and applying for higher education or other courses, and developing study skills.
- **Community participation and social skills:** Goals might involve joining community clubs or groups, developing social networks and participating in recreational activities.

The NDIS can assist with transition planning, including preparing for changes in school settings, accessing further education or vocational training and connecting with relevant services and programs. This helps ensure long-term goals are considered and supported during key transitions.

GOAL SETTING AND INDEPENDENCE

Every individual person has the right to make decisions about their life. If a person with disability can set their own goals, they have the right to do so.

When a person turns 18, their legal rights change. Parents or guardians no longer have parental responsibility, and the person becomes responsible for their own decisions.

Involving young people in goal setting before they turn 18 can help prepare them for independent decision-making in the future.

The NDIS can also support building independent decision-making skills through Capacity Building supports which may include self-advocacy training, communication, and mentoring.



Goal setting for school to FURTHER EDUCATION AND WORK

This stage of life is a time of major change. Teenagers or young adults may be planning to go from high school to further study or to work. Or they may be currently studying and preparing to enter the workforce for the first time.

Being aware of how the NDIS can assist during this time means goals can reflect the supports available. Let's explore the important decisions and steps for a young person with disability to make a successful transition into the world of study or work and how family members can help.

STUDY-RELATED GOALS

Study supports can be complicated because they can come from multiple places. Most study support will come from service providers such as schools, universities and TAFE colleges.

By law, a place of study is responsible for removing any barriers so a student with disability can study on the same basis as someone without disability. That's why the NDIS will only fund study supports that are not funded through another program or service.

Under the NDIS, study supports are the extra support needed because of disability for an individual to:

- Study at school
- Study at university or TAFE
- Try things like volunteering or work experience.

WHAT THE NDIS MAY FUND

- Extra supports an individual needs because of disability.
- Supports to help a person move from school to further study, training or work.
- Personal care during study such as help with going to the toilet, eating or drinking.
- Travel to and from study for students who are unable to travel independently.
- Training for teachers at school, university, TAFE or employers (during placements) about support needs.
- Support to participate in projects run by a university or other educational organisation for people with disability.

The NDIS will generally not fund course fees or textbooks that all students are required to buy.

TIPS FOR GETTING NDIS SUPPORT TO ACHIEVE STUDY GOALS

- Include a study-related goal in their NDIS Plan
- Be well prepared for their NDIS Plan meeting especially when it comes to talking about school, university or vocational training and any support already received
- Think about additional supports they might need
- Gather together school reports or related assessments
- Get a letter from their place of study outlining any additional disability-related needs.

GOING FROM SCHOOL OR FURTHER EDUCATION TO WORK

It's never too early for the young people in your life to start thinking about the future and the career path they want to pursue. Here are some general tips to help them consider further education and work while they're still at school. All of these ideas can be converted into goals for inclusion in an NDIS Plan.



1 EXPLORE INTERESTS

Encourage them to engage in subjects, activities, clubs or hobbies that genuinely captivate them. Discovering what sparks their curiosity and passion can help them identify potential career paths aligned with their interests.

2 RESEARCH DIFFERENT CAREER OPTIONS

Use online resources, attend career expos and encourage them to connect with people in jobs that may be of interest. Research information about the skills, qualifications and job prospects for various careers to help them make informed decisions.

3 REFLECT ON STRENGTHS AND SKILLS

Consider academic and personal strengths, identifying areas where your child excels or enjoys developing. Help them to align these strengths with potential career paths.

4 IDENTIFY POTENTIAL BARRIERS

Entering the workforce can present unique challenges for people with disability. Be prepared to talk about any barriers your child may face in their NDIS plan meeting. The NDIS may fund supports to help overcome some of those challenges.

5 TALK TO MENTORS AND TEACHERS

Seek guidance from teachers, counsellors or professionals in your teen's areas of interest.

6 RESEARCH INCLUSIVE EMPLOYERS

Identify companies and organisations known for their inclusive practices. Evaluate their accessibility and policies. Support them to pursue supportive work cultures that foster growth and success.

7 GAIN PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Encourage them to gain experience in areas of interest. Look for internships, a part-time job or volunteer work that can provide hands-on exposure.

EXAMPLE GOAL AND ACTION STEPS

Goal: *In the next six months, I will actively explore activities, clubs and hobbies that align with my interests.*

By doing so, I aim to find potential career paths that connect with my passions.

Example action steps:

1. Research and identify three activities that align with my interests. Attend introductory sessions to gain first-hand experience.
2. Actively participate in the activities for at least one month each.
3. Work with a career advisor to evaluate how these experiences can align with long-term goals and aspirations.
4. Identify two possible career options for further research and organise work experience or volunteer work at each for one week.


SCHOOL LEAVER EMPLOYMENT SUPPORTS

NDIS school leaver employment supports (SLES) are designed to help students with disability find and start a job. SLES build a bridge between school and work, helping students understand their potential, develop skills and build confidence.

They may be available throughout the last period of high school and immediately after leaving school for up to two years. SLES can cover every step of this transition, from identifying the type of work to do and learning new skills to moving into the workforce and starting a new role.

Examples of SLES include:

- Work experience
- Job-ready skills, including time management and travel preparation
- Personal development
- Decision making and problem-solving
- Computer literacy
- Preparing a resume, submitting an application and interview skills
- Preparation for your first day
- Understanding rights and responsibilities in the workplace

Reference: [ndis.gov.au/providers/working-provider/school-leaver-employment-supports](https://www.ndis.gov.au/providers/working-provider/school-leaver-employment-supports) 

A photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt, smiling and looking up at a baby she is holding. The baby is wearing a blue and white striped shirt and has a joyful expression with its mouth open. The background is a bright, indoor setting with a wooden railing.

Navigate the NDIS

with confidence.

Introducing the Leap in! Knowledge Centre.

We know that understanding the NDIS can sometimes be tricky.

That's why the Leap in! Crew have created a free online Knowledge Centre that includes everything you need to know about the NDIS and life with disability.

You'll find:

- NDIS ebook series
- Leap in! and Source Kids emagazine series (like this one)
- Latest NDIS news and disability-related stories
- Leap in! Presents webinar series
- NDIS FAQs
- Quick guides and checklists
- Info on disability advocates.

We're constantly adding and updating the content to make sure you have access to the latest info about the NDIS and things that affect people with disability and their families.

Check it out in the main menu at leapin.com.au.

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Call us on **1300 05 78 78**

Where to get help with goal setting

Having a knowledgeable guide who understands the NDIS can greatly simplify the goal-setting process. Local area coordinators, support coordinators, support workers, allied health professionals, family members and friends may all have some creative ideas. The right person will be able to explore options with you, your child and your family, make suggestions and help determine the right goals.



LOCAL AREA COORDINATOR (LAC)

An NDIS local area coordinator (LAC) can help you create and work towards goals, make decisions and access the right supports.

When it comes to goals, a LAC can:

- Help you and your family to understand and access the NDIS.
- Talk to you about goals and write them down in your child's own words as part of an NDIS Plan or plan reassessment.
- Connect you with relevant supports and providers.
- Help you use the supports in your child's plan to achieve their goals.
- Provide support with any goal changes.



ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Providers who work closely with you regularly often get to know you well. That's why occupational therapists, physiotherapists or speech therapists can sometimes offer valuable insights into setting realistic and achievable goals.

They can:

- Provide reports on goals achieved to date.
- Identify barriers and how they can be overcome.
- Conduct assessments to identify abilities, strengths and areas for improvement.
- Help break broader goals into smaller, actionable steps.
- Suggest adaptive techniques, assistive technologies or therapies.
- Assess whether goals need to be adjusted or modified based on changing needs and circumstances.



OTHER PEOPLE IN YOUR SUPPORT NETWORK

Family members, friends or mentors who know you well can provide insights and perspectives on your strengths, interests and potential areas for growth. Their input can be super helpful when setting goals.

Talking to other people on the NDIS about their goals, and how they record and track them can provide a unique perspective. Often someone with lived experience who has been through the process before will be able to share valuable tips.

A support worker can also be a valuable source of advice and guidance.



SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING

Some people with disability may require support when it comes to making decisions. "Supported decision making" is the term used when a person makes a decision by themselves with support or assistance from others. This provides an opportunity for the person to learn and build their decision-making capabilities.

Source: [People with disability and supported decision making: A guide for providers.](#)

It's important to find a balance between independent decision-making and receiving the necessary support. Depending on the individual, some decisions may require guidance or assistance, like long-term education or employment goals, while others can be made independently. 🗣️

SUPPORT COORDINATOR

A support coordinator is a person who connects people on the NDIS to organisations that provide supports and services including community, mainstream and government services.

When it comes to goals, a support coordinator can:

- Help identify and describe goals and the steps to achieve them.
- Support you and your family to monitor and track goals.
- Explain how to use the supports in an NDIS Plan to achieve your child's goals.
- Connect you with relevant services.
- Assist with service agreements and bookings.
- Support the goal review process and help you to prepare new goals ahead of a plan reassessment meeting.

TOP TIP

While a support coordinator can provide information and help you and your family make choices, they are unable to make decisions on behalf of an NDIS participant.

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What to do **IF YOUR CHILD'S GOALS CHANGE**

It's a fact of life that things change. Changes to personal circumstances, health, carer availability and other factors can affect your child's goals, NDIS Plan and the supports they need. Perhaps they've had a setback in therapy, a change in the amount of time you have available to support them or they leave school earlier than expected.

Here, we explore how to tell if NDIS goals should be changed and what to do about it.

HOW TO IDENTIFY IF YOUR CHILD'S NDIS GOALS SHOULD CHANGE.

1. Take some time to reflect on current goals and assess whether they still resonate with your child and family's aspirations and priorities. Consider any shifts in circumstances, interests or desired outcomes. If you find that their goals no longer align with the family's current situation or your child's aspirations, it may be an indication that they have changed.
2. Assess progress towards existing goals. Are they making steady progress, or have they encountered significant barriers along the way?
3. Consult with trusted individuals, such as family members, friends or professionals to gain their perspectives and insights.

Goal updates are a natural part of personal growth and development. By regularly assessing and updating your child's goals, you can ensure they remain relevant and meaningful.

HOW TO CHANGE GOALS WITH THE NDIS

The good news is that NDIS goals can be changed at any time without changing anything else in an NDIS Plan. The NDIS will update the plan with a new statement of goals and aspirations and send a varied plan within seven days.

WHEN TO UPDATE AN NDIS PLAN

If changes to your child's goals also result in changes to their support needs, it's best to ask for a plan reassessment. This may be needed if changes are made in some of the following areas.

- Significant changes in care or support provided by family or friends.
- Changes to disability needs. For example, an increase or decrease in support needs.
- Adjustments to educational goals like leaving school earlier than expected.
- Changes to living arrangements. For example, moving into a new house.
- Your child's health and well-being have changed. For example, their disability is affecting their health in a different way.
- Children with changing goals and developmental needs whose support needs have changed.

What to do if your circumstances change

It's important you let the NDIS know as soon as you know your circumstances have changed or are likely to change.

This can be done in several ways:

- By phone: 1800 800 110
- By email, along with supporting evidence to enquiries@ndis.gov.au
- Completing a change of details or change of situation form
- Post a letter with supporting evidence to Chief Executive Officer, National Disability Insurance Agency, GPO Box 700 Canberra ACT 2601
- Visit an NDIS office.

You can also complete the change of details or change of situation form to request a plan reassessment if your plan no longer meets your needs.

Once the NDIS receives your information, it will carry out any changes requested and let you know once that's done. They may also contact you to discuss your options and whether a full plan reassessment is needed.

Good to know:

If you don't let the NDIS know that your circumstances have changed and you continue to receive supports that aren't right for you, you may have to pay the money back. ⑤



TRACKING, CELEBRATING

and reviewing goals

It's helpful to review your child's goals regularly to check if everything is on track and ensure they're taking steps towards achieving them.

Reviewing progress also allows you to make adjustments when needed, even if they're only minor. Reflecting on achievements builds confidence. Celebrating the wins, no matter how small, encourages your child (and you!) to keep going.

GET CREATIVE WITH TRACKING PROGRESS

The best way to stay on track with goal progress is to set some review dates along the way. It could be as simple as a monthly calendar reminder to review your child's goals together and make a plan for the next month.

This method is a sure-fire way to identify if you need to be more proactive or make some changes to their plan. Life is busy. Taking action along the way and achieving even part of a goal helps build goal reviews into your regular routine.

Tracking progress can also keep you and your child motivated. This is your chance to get creative!



- **DRAW A GOAL CHART OR POSTER** with goals and milestones using colourful markers, stickers or stamps to mark off achievements over time.
- **HAVE A GOAL JAR** with your child's name written on it and every time they make progress, drop a small token into the jar so they can watch it fill as they progress.
- **ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO KEEP A GOAL JOURNAL** or diary where they can write or draw about their progress, feelings or any challenges they face.
- **CREATE A VISION BOARD** with pictures and words that represent their goals. Display it in their room as a daily reminder of what they're working towards.
- **USE AN APP** designed to help kids track goals and habits in a fun and interactive way. Some apps include gamified features and virtual rewards.
- **CREATE A POSTER OR GLOW-IN-THE-DARK STICKERS** to create a "starry night sky" on the ceiling of your child's room. Each star represents a goal or milestone, and they can add a star sticker for every achievement.



Reflecting on your child's achievements

Plan a mini-celebration with all the family when your child, teen or young adult reaches a significant milestone. It could be a small party, a favourite meal, or a special outing to mark their achievement. Here are some ideas:

Reward your child with a small gift or treat.

Celebrate with family and friends with a BBQ, outing or play date.

Plan a family outing.

Cook a special meal or dessert together.

Craft a DIY trophy or medal using art supplies or materials around the house. Let your child design and decorate it to commemorate their success.

Encourage them to reflect on their achievements in their goal journey, vision board or wherever they're keeping track of their goals.

Let them choose how to celebrate.

Create a certificate or other memento of their achievement.

PREPARING FOR AN NDIS PLAN REASSESSMENT

Even if your child has been with the NDIS for a while, it's worthwhile being well prepared for their plan reassessment. Being prepared is also the best way to ensure they get the supports they really need.

Spend some time reviewing their goals, current supports and ideal future supports. The Leap in! app has a dedicated section where you can add all the information needed for a plan reassessment so you feel organised and confident.

SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:

- Do my child's goals still reflect what they're aiming to achieve?
- Do any goals need adjusting due to changes in circumstances or priorities?
- What are the actions or habits that helped my child to achieve their goals?
- How close are they to achieving each goal?
- Are we spending all of their NDIS funds?
- Could their NDIS funds go further?
- What barriers are in the way of achieving their goals?

Remember, goal setting is a dynamic process. It requires planning, action and of course, flexibility. By following some of the tips in this emag, you can set your child, teen or young adult up for success and help them make steady progress towards achieving their goals. 🌟

A woman with long brown hair is smiling broadly and hugging a young child from behind. They are outdoors, with a black metal fence and trees in the background. The sun is low in the sky, creating a warm, golden glow. The woman is wearing a dark blue tank top and patterned shorts. The child is wearing a blue t-shirt and shorts. The overall mood is joyful and intimate.

NDIS plan management

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