

NDIS: IMPACT ON YOUNG CARERS



The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a new system of providing support and services to people with significant and permanent disability. It changes the way services are delivered to people with disability, their families and carers. It also changes the way these services are funded.

This affects what supports are available for young carers, and under what circumstances.

What is the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)?

The NDIA administers the NDIS and employs planners to work with people with disability and their family carers to develop a NDIS plan. It is also in charge of the money and makes decisions about how much money will be allocated to each plan.

Who is the NDIS for?

The NDIS is primarily for people with disability. Family carers receive no funding in their own right unless it is to improve their ability to support the person with disability.

What does this mean for young carer services?

Some funding previously available for young carer services is being redirected into the NDIS. As a result, some young carer services may become unavailable and others may need to be accessed through the NDIS.

Accessing services through the NDIS

Young carers may be able to access some services such as respite and family counselling through the NDIS. For this to occur, a number of conditions need to be met:

- The person with disability must be a NDIS participant, and not all people with disability will be eligible. Eligibility can be checked here: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/ndis-access-checklist>.
- Services for the young carer must be included in the NDIS Plan of the person with disability. This plan is developed and agreed upon in a planning meeting with a NDIA Planner. The plan lists reasonable and necessary supports for the person with disability. Supports for carers can only be included if they are necessary to sustain the care relationship. Further details can be found here: <https://www.ndis.gov.au/families-carers/family-supports.html>.

NDIS Carer Statement

In preparing for a NDIS planning meeting or review, it is worth considering putting together a Carer Statement which outlines the young carer's ability to care now and in future, their willingness to keep on caring, and the impact of the caring role on them.

The Carer Statement informs what support carers (not just young carers) may need. There is no formal guideline or template for the Statement; however, a checklist can be found on the Carers Australia website: www.carersaustralia.com.au.

NDIS planning and review meetings

It is important to consider whether or not a young carer should attend NDIS planning/review meetings alongside the person they care for. In any case, it is important to come prepared, with a clear understanding of the young carer's role and needs, what supports might be necessary and available. Detailed information can be found on the Carers SA website <http://carers-sa.asn.au/contact-assets/disability-support/ndis> and Carers SA's NDIS Fact Sheet www.goo.gl/OLMEYh.

NDIS transition support

When a person with disability who is registered with Disability SA transitions to the NDIS, Disability SA is obligated to continue providing support until the transition is complete and NDIS-funded services are in place.

Accessing services outside the NDIS

Some young carer services will remain available outside the NDIS. **This is particularly important for young carers of people who cannot access the NDIS.** Services currently available outside the NDIS include:

- **Information/referral** for young carers is available through Carers SA's Carer Advisory Service (1800 242 636) and the National Carer Gateway (1800 422 737).
- **Indirect respite** for young carers is available through your local carer organisation. For referrals, call Carers SA's Carer Advisory Service (1800 242 636).
- **Young Carer Bursaries** are available annually through the Young Carer Bursary Programme. More information is available here: <http://bursaries.youngcarers.net.au>

Direct respite provides the young carer with alternative care for the person for whom he/she is the primary carer.

Indirect respite relieves the young carer of tasks other than the caring role, for example shopping, gardening or cleaning, where these tasks would obstruct the young carer's education.

Services that may reduce or cease as a result of the transfer of funding to the NDIS include:

- Some social/emotional supports such as young carer groups, camps and retreats
- Specialist carer counselling (as opposed to family counselling available under the NDIS)
- Direct respite for young carers of people not eligible for the NDIS or alternative funding (for example aged care funding).

Whilst some services may cease, similar services may be available via alternative pathways. For example, counselling may be available through the primary health system, support groups and camps through youth organisations. These services would not be designed around the specific needs of young carers, however, might still be suitable for some. Carers SA's Carer Advisory Service (1800 242 636) can provide information on what is available in your area.

A key barrier to young carers receiving any form of assistance is lack of identification. When meeting a child or sibling of a person with disability, few professionals will check whether they provide care. So if you are a young carer, the single most important thing you can do is point out your caring role to those who support the person you care for and those who support you!