

# Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the NDIS

## Applying for the NDIS

May 2020

# Applying for the NDIS

This information pack is designed to help people who want to apply for the NDIS during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our priority is to support potential and existing NDIS participants so that they can receive the disability supports and services they need.

To make it easier for people to apply for the NDIS, you can:

- Call us on 1800 800 110; or
- Email us at [NAT@ndis.gov.au](mailto:NAT@ndis.gov.au); or
- Use forms that are now available on our website.

It's also important to maintain physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with the online forms, we've introduced new processes for you to return your Access Request Form and supporting information to us.

We are regularly updating the NDIS website with information for you, and will be complementing this by sharing information packs such as this on specific topics.

You can support our communications throughout the pandemic by using the following links to the NDIS website:

- [NDIS Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information and support](#)
- [NDIS what happens when](#)

Please let us know which topics you would like information on in the future as well as any other feedback you have to [communications@ndis.gov.au](mailto:communications@ndis.gov.au).

## Eligibility

To be eligible for the NDIS, a person must meet the age, residence, and disability or early intervention requirements detailed in the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013*.

The following questions can help you decide whether you should apply for the NDIS. The final decision about your eligibility is up to the NDIA.

For more information, please refer to our [website](#)

### Are you under 65 years old?

To access the NDIS you must be younger than 65 years at the time you apply.

### Do you have Australian residency?

To access the NDIS you must live in Australia permanently and:

- be an Australian citizen, or
- hold a permanent visa, or
- hold a Protected Special Category visa.

### Do you usually need any of the following supports so you can complete everyday tasks or participate in your community?

- Help from another person.
- Special equipment (assistive technology).
- Modifications to your home.

To access the NDIS, you need to have a permanent and significant disability that stops you from doing everyday things by yourself. This includes disabilities that are episodic, such as people who have a significant and lifelong psychosocial disability.

### Do you need some supports now to reduce your future needs?

To access the NDIS to receive early intervention supports, you must:

- be a child under 7 years of age with a significant developmental delay requiring a certain level of intervention, or
- be aged 0-65, have an impairment that is permanent or likely to be permanent, and;

There also needs to be evidence that getting support now will help you by:

- preventing, reducing or alleviating the impacts of your disability or developmental delay
- building your skills and independence.

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## Children under 7 years

If your child is under 7 years of age, an Early Childhood partner is the first point of contact for any queries you may have regarding your child's support needs. Enter your postcode on the [locations page](#) to find your local Early Childhood partner.

Your local Early Childhood partner will help you work out the supports that meet your child and family needs. If an NDIS access request is needed, they will support you through this process.

If you live in area where there is no Early Childhood partner, you'll need to call the NDIS on 1800 800 110 to connect with your local NDIA office.

## People aged 7 - 65 years

You can download the [Access Request Form](#) or [Supporting Evidence Form](#) from our website to apply for the NDIS.

You can also contact us on 1800 800 110 and make a Verbal Access Request, or ask us to post or email an Access Request Form to you.

## Access Request Form

You will need to complete the personal details needed in the Access Request Form. These details include identifying information like your name, date of birth, address, as well as information about your primary disability. We will need to confirm your age and the residency details you put in the form. If you are a Centrelink customer, the easiest way to do this is to consent for us to use your Centrelink record.

You can provide information about your disability by sending copies of any existing reports, assessments or letters that explain how your disability impacts your everyday life. These can be returned with your Access Request Form. If you provide us with existing information about your disability, you do not need to complete Part F of the Access Request Form.

If you do not have evidence of your disability available, make sure that you have your treating health professional complete Part F of the Access Request Form before you send it back to us.

Your Access Request Form needs a signature, and can be signed by:

- You as the potential participant, provided you are aged 18 and over
- Your parent/guardian, if you are aged 0-17 years
- Your legally authorised representative.

If you are completing the Access Request Form digitally, you can use a digital signature. You must complete the digital signature last. If you make any changes to the form after you have signed it, you will need to sign it again, at the end.

If you are unable to sign your Access Request Form with a digital signature you can phone 1800 800 110 and make a Verbal Access Request.

## Supporting Evidence Form

If we need more information from you to decide if you are eligible for the NDIS, we will let you know. You can then ask your treating health professional to complete the Supporting Evidence Form.

There are many different ways you can gather the supporting information you need to provide with your Access Request. This includes over the phone and via email.

Most medical and allied health professionals are using telepractice or telehealth so that they can continue to support their patients and clients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Medicare benefits are available for video consultations between specialists and patients who are located in telehealth eligible areas. Further information is available on the [Services Australia](#) website.

## Evidence of Psychosocial Disability Form

If you have a psychosocial disability, the [Evidence of Psychosocial Disability Form](#) can help you with collecting evidence to support your access request.

## Returning your Access Request Form

Depending on your preferences, you can:

- complete and email the form from your computer to [NAT@ndis.gov.au](mailto:NAT@ndis.gov.au)
- print it out and post it back to us at GPO Box 700, Canberra, ACT 2601.
- ask us to send you forms in the post and post it back to us
- complete and return the form to your local NDIA office.

If you are unwell or isolating, please do not attend an NDIA office.

As a result of COVID-19, we know that it may take more time to collect the information you need to support your access request. Please take all the time you need before returning the forms to us.

Email is the quickest and easiest way to share information with us about your access request. Please do not send USB devices or CDs, as we will not be able to use this information.

## Next steps

Once you have provided us with a completed Access Request Form and all of the required supporting information, we must make a decision about your eligibility in 21 days, or ask you for more information.

If we ask you for more information, we must make a decision about your eligibility within 14 days of receiving this additional information from you.

We will send you a letter to let you know if you are eligible for the NDIS and explain the next steps.

If you are eligible for the NDIS, we will call you to arrange a planning meeting. During the COVID-19 pandemic, planning meetings are being conducted over the phone.

If you are not eligible for the NDIS, you can still get information and help from your Local Area Coordinator or Early Childhood Partner who may be able to link you with supports and services in your community. There are a range of supports within the community, which can assist people who are not eligible for the NDIS.

You also have the right to ask the NDIA for an internal review of your access decision. If you have new supporting information about the impacts your disability has on your everyday life, you can also apply again.

We understand that things change and so there are no limits to the number of times you can apply for the NDIS.

Your Local Area Coordinator, Early Childhood Partner or the NDIA, can let you know how to do this and can put you in touch with someone, such as an advocate, who can help you with this process.

## More information

In a rapidly changing environment, it can be difficult to keep up-to-date with the latest information and guidance around COVID-19.

If you need more information about applying to access the NDIS, you can talk to your Local Area Coordinator or Early Childhood Partner. Contact details are on our [website](#).

You can also call us on 1800 800 110 or email us at [enquiries@ndis.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@ndis.gov.au)

To stay up-to-date, we recommend you regularly visit the following websites to check for updates:

- [National Disability Insurance Scheme](#)
- [NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission](#)
- [Services Australia](#)
- [Australian Department of Health](#).

You can also sign-up to receive the [NDIS eNewsletter](#) and follow us on social media.

## Resources

[Applying to access the NDIS](#)

[Information for GPs and health professionals](#)