

## Choosing NDIS service providers: what to look for

**Choosing the NDIS services and service providers that best meet your child's needs might seem hard. It can help to use the national guidelines on best practice in early childhood intervention to compare and choose NDIS service providers. This article explains how.**



### Deciding on NDIS service providers

If you haven't already been referred to a service or provider, your [NDIA planner](#), [NDIS early childhood partner](#), [NDIS local area coordination partner](#), GP or health professional can help you find and choose a service provider.

It might also help to start with a list of [NDIS registered services in your area](#). Registered providers must meet NDIS standards, as well as your state's or territory's laws for service providers.



The NDIS is being introduced gradually and will be available everywhere in Australia by 2019-20, except for Western Australia where trials will continue. Find out [when the NDIS will be in your area](#).

### What makes a good NDIS service provider

Early Childhood Intervention Australia has developed a set of guidelines for NDIS service providers – [The National Guidelines: Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention](#).

You can use the Guidelines to compare NDIS service providers and choose the right providers for your child and family. The Guidelines say that **the best providers have the following eight features**.

#### Family centred

This means NDIS service providers:

- work in partnership with you and your family
- provide interventions for your child that take into account your family's priorities and home situation
- build on your family's strengths and help you develop your own support networks.

#### Culturally sensitive

This means NDIS service providers:

- welcome everyone regardless of their cultural, language or religious backgrounds or family beliefs
- encourage all families to be involved in their children's learning and development
- know about and respect diversity
- provide services and support that take into account your family's cultural, language and religious background and your family's beliefs.

#### Inclusive

This means NDIS service providers:

- recognise that every child has the right to take part in family and community life and to have the same choices, opportunities and experiences as other children
- understand that all children need to feel accepted and to have a real sense of belonging
- understand that children with disability or developmental delay might need extra support so

that they can fully take part in everyday life with their families, in their community, and at school or preschool.

### **Focused on everyday life**

This means NDIS service providers:

- help your child to take part in daily life at home, in the community, or at child care or school
- understand that supporting your child in his daily life can help him to feel that he belongs, and can give him opportunities to learn and practise skills.

### **Focused on teamwork**

This means NDIS service providers:

- work as a team with your family
- share information, knowledge and skills with your family
- give your family one main person to work with.

### **Focused on building knowledge and skills**

This means NDIS service providers build the knowledge, skills and abilities of the people who spend the most time with your child. This helps these people have the biggest possible impact on your child's learning and development.

### **Qualified and evidence based**

This means NDIS service providers:

- employ professionals with appropriate expertise and qualifications
- use intervention strategies that are grounded in research and solid clinical evidence
- measure themselves against the National Guidelines: Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention.

### **Focused on outcomes**

This means NDIS service providers:

- focus on outcomes that you want for your child and family
- identify the skills you and your family need to achieve these outcomes.

### **NDIS service providers: practical things to think about**

When you're choosing NDIS services, it's important to look for providers that **meet your specific needs**. You can do this by asking practical questions about service provision, thinking about accessibility, and meeting providers face to face if you can.

#### **Service provision**

You could ask the service provider these questions:

- How will you work with me to support my child's development?
- What qualifications and experience do the professionals in your organisation have?
- Where will my child get the support – for example, at home, at preschool or child care, or in group programs?
- How much flexibility is there? In other words, how much choice will I have about what to use within the service?
- What support can you give my child when she moves to kindergarten, child care or school? For example, will you come to kindergarten, child care or school meetings if I want you to?
- How will you support the mainstream or community activities that my child might be involved with – for example, playgroups or sports clubs?
- How long will I have to wait before the support can start?
- What can I do if I'm unhappy with the support you're providing for my child?

#### **Accessibility**

You could think about these questions:

- Can you and your child get to the service easily? For example, can you get there by public transport, or is there a car park nearby?
- When and how often will your child need the service?

- How long is each session likely to take?

### Meeting face to face

If you meet face to face with **NDIS service providers**, rather than over the phone, you can often get more information. You can also get a better sense of whether service providers are really listening to you and trying to understand your goals.

When you're talking to services directly, make sure you know the name and position of the person you're speaking to in case you need to follow up later.



If you find that the provider you've chosen isn't the right one for you, your NDIS planner or partner can help you switch to a new provider.



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### More to explore

- Meeting with disability professionals
- NDIS services for children: overview
- Early intervention and the National Disability Insurance Scheme
- The NDIS pathway: how to get NDIS support

### Web links

- National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

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