



Frequently Asked Questions

Revised High Intensity Support Skills Descriptors, December 2022

What are the High Intensity Support Skills Descriptors (HISSD)?

The high intensity support skills descriptors (HISSD) describe the skills and knowledge that NDIS providers should ensure their workers have when supporting participants with high intensity daily personal activities (HIDPA) as defined in the NDIS Practice Standards (High Intensity Daily Personal Activities Module).

Are these new skills descriptors?

No, these are not new skill descriptors. The high intensity support skills descriptors were first published in 2018 with the NDIS Practice Standard Quality Indicators. The revised skill descriptors are an update to the 2018 skill descriptors after consultation with allied health bodies, NDIS providers, participants, and unions.

What has changed?

The review of the skills descriptors were undertaken as a project element within the NDIS Workforce Capability Framework project. The review has:

- updated the content of the skills descriptors in line with contemporary practice and expert advice,
- updated the format and language of the descriptors to align with the contemporary language and participant focus adopted in the workforce capability framework.

The points to note in the changes from the 2018 version of the skill descriptors:

Participant focus: A focus on participant engagement and control has been embedded in the revised the skill descriptors.

Alignment: The revised skill descriptors broadly align with Module 1 High Intensity Daily Personal Activities (HIDPAs) and include the following changes:

- A new descriptor has been included in the skill descriptors to support participants with dysphagia.
- The stoma care skill descriptor has now been integrated into descriptors for bowel care, enteral feeding, tracheostomy support and ventilator support and supporting people who use urinary catheters.
- The wound care skills descriptor has changed from being additional advice to being included as a skill descriptor.

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- Some of the revised the skill descriptors include optional guidance to support common applications. For example, the skill descriptors for subcutaneous injections includes guidance when supporting a participant to manage diabetes; the enteral feeding the skill descriptors provides guidance when workers are supporting participants who receive medication via a feeding tube.
 - The skill descriptor for workers who support participants to manage epilepsy and seizures is remaining as an additional descriptor, as it was in the previous version.
 - The skill descriptor to support mealtime preparation and delivery which was in the previous version as an additional descriptor is now included as an additional capability in the workforce capability framework.

Training: The revised skill descriptors has an emphasis on confirming currency of skills and knowledge and providing training as required, where there is change in participant support plans or support workers.

Detail of skills and knowledge: The new skill descriptors do not represent significant changes in scope of worker responsibility but provide more detailed guidance on skills and knowledge.

When do these updated skill descriptors come into effect?

The revised high intensity support skills descriptors will be available on the NDIS Commission website in December 2022 and will become effective 1 February 2023.

Who are the high intensity support skill descriptors for?

The HISSD provides guidance for NDIS providers, workers, auditors, and participants. They describe the skills and knowledge that NDIS providers should ensure their workers have when supporting participants with high intensity daily personal activities (HIDPA) as defined in the NDIS Practice Standards (High Intensity Daily Personal Activities Module).

NDIS service providers should ensure their workers are aware of these expectations and receive the training and support they need to achieve them.

How do you use the skills descriptors?

The HISSD provide guidance on appropriate training for workers delivering HIDPAs, including periodic reassessment and refresher training.

Auditors will use the descriptors as a guide when auditing the high intensity daily personal activities modules. Providers should be able to demonstrate during their three year audit, mid-term audit, or if required for compliance, that the workers have the necessary skills and training.

Participants, their family and their support network can use the HISSDs to understand the quality of support they can expect and as a reference when talking with service providers and selecting workers.

Trainers should use the HISSDs to ensure the training they offer equips workers with the skills and knowledge expected to provide high intensity supports.

How do the HISSD link to regulatory requirements and the NDIS Workforce Capability Framework (the Framework)?

	Who it applies to	What it covers	Workforce requirements
Regulation			
Code of conduct	Must be met by all NDIS providers and workers	Minimum standards to be met when providing NDIS supports and services	NDIS providers and workers must 'provide supports and services in a safe and competent manner with care and skill'
NDIS Practice Standards & Quality Indicators	Must be met by registered NDIS providers Advisory for unregistered providers	NDIS practice standards describe high-level, participant focused outcomes Quality indicators set out indicators that demonstrate achievement of each practice standard outcome	The quality indicators set out the requirements that workers are trained in the specific needs of the participant, and have the skills to meet the relevant indicators of high intensity daily personal activities (HIPDAs)
Guidance to meet requirements			
High Intensity Support Skills Descriptors (HISSD)	Applies to all NDIS providers and workers delivering high intensity daily personal activities	Supplementary advice to support NDIS providers and workers to comply with the High Intensity Daily Personal Activities (HIDPA) module in the NDIS practice standards.	The HISSD describe the additional specialised capabilities needed to deliver high intensity supports related to the HIDPAs.
Supporting resources			
NDIS Workforce Capability Framework	Applies to all NDIS providers and workers	Translates the NDIS Practice Standards and Code of Conduct into observable behaviours that NDIS providers and workers should demonstrate when delivering supports and services.	Describes the core and additional capabilities that all NDIS workers should demonstrate when providing supports 'in a safe and competent manner with care and skill'.