

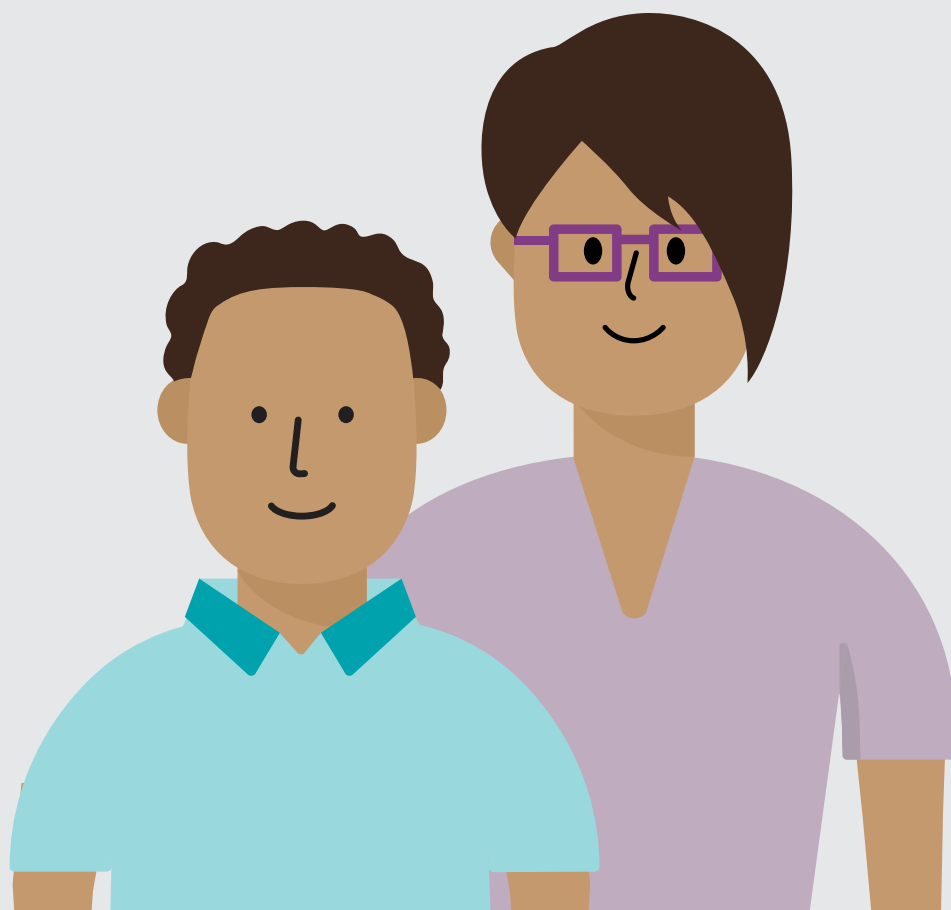


NDIS Quality
and Safeguards
Commission



Quality support for children in the NDIS

A resource for parents and carers



This booklet covers:

- what quality supports for your child look like
- what providers should and cannot do
- the rules providers must follow
- questions you can ask when choosing providers.

Welcome

This booklet is for families and carers of children who are NDIS participants. If your child has NDIS funding for early childhood intervention, therapy supports or behaviour support, this booklet will help you understand whether your provider uses quality practices.

This means understanding if your provider:

- puts the safety and wellbeing of your child at the centre of what they do
- offers quality services that represent best practice
- focuses on positive outcomes for your child and family.

Providers should work closely with you to make sure their support:

- meets your needs and expectations
- promotes inclusion and social participation
- improves quality of life for your child and family.

We detail what to expect from an early childhood intervention or therapy provider, or a specialist behaviour support provider. We explain what quality practice does and doesn't look like, as well as what is never allowed.

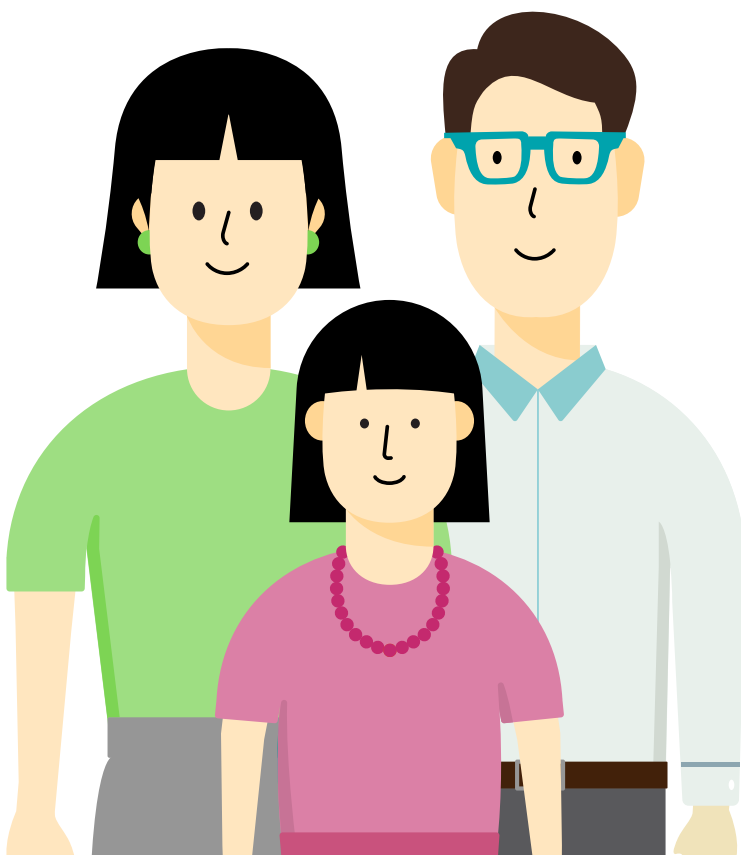
We also have questions to help you ask your provider about quality supports.

Finally, we have links to more information about quality support, plus who to contact with questions or to make a complaint.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission have prepared this resource.

For more information about this resource, you can visit:

- [the NDIS website](#)
- [the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission website.](#)



Providers

About providers

An NDIS provider is a business that delivers an NDIS-funded support or service to an NDIS participant. It may be:

- an individual (sometimes called a sole trader)
- an organisation.

NDIS providers can apply to be registered with the [NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission](#) (NDIS Commission).

Not all NDIS providers must be registered with the NDIS Commission. But they must be registered to provide certain types of NDIS services including:

- developing behaviour support plans
- implementing regulated restrictive practices.

They must also be registered to provide services for participants with a plan the NDIA manages.

Provider requirements

Working with Children Check

Providers caring for children must have a Working with Children Check under state and territory laws. This helps protect children from sexual and physical harm.

NDIS Worker Screening Check

Workers in some roles also need an NDIS Worker Screening Check when working for a registered NDIS provider.

This assesses if someone may be a risk to people with disability when working with them or seeking to.

Any individual provider or worker can apply for an [NDIS Worker Screening Check](#), whether or not they are a registered NDIS provider.

Professional registration

Providers or their staff may also need to register with a relevant professional body to practice in Australia.

Examples include:

- A psychologist or physiotherapist must be registered with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA).
- A speech pathologist must be a certified practising member with Speech Pathology Australia.
- An early childhood teacher must be registered with the relevant body in their state or territory where this applies.
- A music therapist must be registered with the Australian Music Therapy Association (AMTA).

Provider obligations

About the NDIS Code of Conduct

The [NDIS Code of Conduct](#) details how providers and workers must act when delivering NDIS services to an NDIS participant. They must all abide by this code.

Understanding the code helps you clearly explain to your provider your expectations of them. It doesn't matter if they are registered with the NDIS Commission or not.

What the code says

Under the code, all providers and their workers must do the following:

- Act with respect for individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making in accordance with relevant laws and conventions.
- Respect the privacy of people with disability.
- Provide supports and services in a safe, competent manner with care and skill. This means they must be suitably trained, qualified and safe to practice.
- Act with integrity, honesty and transparency.
- Promptly raise and act on concerns about matters that may impact the quality and safety of supports provided to people with disability.
- Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to all forms of violence, exploitation, neglect and abuse of people with disability.

- Take all reasonable steps to prevent and respond to sexual misconduct.
- Not advertise or charge higher prices for NDIS participants than for non-participants, without a valid reason.

You can find more information about the NDIS Code in the [NDIS Code of Conduct Guidelines](#).

NDIS Practice Standards

The [NDIS Practice Standards](#) provide more guidance on what safe and quality services from providers should look like. It details other standards providers must meet when they are registered with the NDIS Commission.

Some of the NDIS Practice Standards apply to all registered NDIS providers. Others apply only to providers registered for certain types of support.

NDIS Practice Standards for specific types of support relevant to many children and families include:

- Early Childhood Support - for providers delivering early childhood intervention supports
- Specialist Behaviour Support - for providers who develop behaviour support plans.

There are also NDIS Practice Standards for providers who implement regulated restrictive practice as part of a behaviour support plan, and for providers of certain high intensity disability related health supports.

Using registered NDIS providers

There are several benefits to using [registered NDIS providers](#):

- They must comply with the NDIS Practice Standards relevant to the supports they provide, in addition to the NDIS Code of Conduct.
- This includes the NDIS Practice Standards that ensures workers are:
 - suitably trained, qualified and safe to practice
 - have a current NDIS Worker Screening Check
 - deemed suitable by the NDIS Commission to provide specialist behaviour support under a provider's registration if they are behaviour support practitioners.

They undergo regular independent audits against the NDIS Practice Standards under their conditions of registration with the NDIS Commission.

Finding registered NDIS providers

You can find a registered NDIS provider:

- on the [Find a registered provider](#) page of the NDIS website
- by speaking with your my NDIS contact detailed on your child's NDIS plan.

The NDIS Commission publishes information about registered NDIS providers. This includes the types of support they are registered to provide.

The NDIS Commission also publishes compliance and enforcement action taken against providers, both registered and unregistered, as well as other individuals.

Find this information on the [NDIS Provider Register](#).



Decision-making

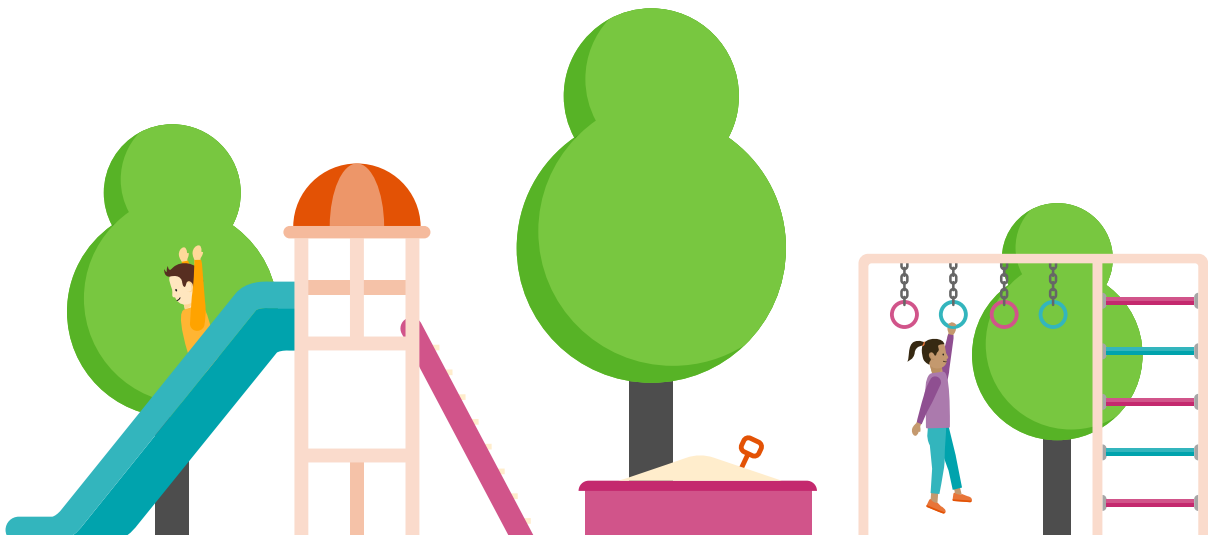
Providers must respect your child's rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making.

The following are examples of what quality practices do and don't look like in early childhood intervention or therapy, along with questions you can ask your provider.



Quality practices do look like

- Communicating in your child's preference, like:
 - using assistive technology
 - augmented and alternative communication
 - key word signs, Auslan or visual supports
- Using a 'first ... then ...' strategy to help them move through activities.
- Asking your child if they want to do an activity, like offering 2 items to support decision-making.
- Using developmentally appropriate acknowledgement, praise or rewards.
- Helping your child with strategies that support them to be calm or feel safe. Providers may call this regulation.
- Recognising that your child's behaviour is a form of communication.
- Helping understand the right to speak up when you or your child feels unhappy, uncomfortable or unsafe.





Quality practices don't look like

- Using words that are hard to understand and not explaining things clearly.
- Telling your child what to do rather than giving options.
- Not respecting your child's decision if they say 'no'.
- Not letting your child move to another activity or area freely accessible to other children until they follow an instruction.
- Not reading or responding appropriately to your child's cues when they are upset.
- Providers are never allowed to force your child to do something they don't want to.
- Providers are never allowed to isolate your child from other children for punishment.



Questions you can ask your provider

- How will you help my child show preferences and make choices with what they do?
- Do you use rewards and consequences? How will this help my child learn?
- How will you help my child if they do not want to take part in an activity?
- What do you do if my child displays behaviours of concern?
- How will you help me and other people in my child's life learn about how my child communicates? How can we support my child to make decisions?

Privacy and dignity

Providers must respect your child's right to privacy and protect their dignity.

The following are examples of what quality practices do and don't look like in early childhood intervention or therapy, along with questions you can ask your provider.



Quality practices do look like

- Spaces that are well set up and safe for children to play and move in.
- Conversations in suitable spaces that offer privacy for you and your child.
- Information about the provider's confidentiality process is in their service agreement.
- Preparing your child for changes to routines or staff.
- Asking permission of you and your child before physically touching or moving your child. For example:
 - saying your child's name and using simple language to ask if they can touch your child's hip or spine as part of an assessment.
 - supporting a child who is a wheelchair user by asking if it's ok to move them and also letting them know where they are going.
- Minimising the number of staff assisting your child with personal care needs (like changing a nappy) to increase your child's safety, privacy and dignity.
- Asking your consent and your child's permission to share information with others.
- Providing personal care to your child in an appropriately private environment.



Quality practices don't look like

- Identifying to others that your child has behaviours of concern, like your child is the only one allowed to use calming toys or the quiet area.
- Using a seating system with a lap belt so that your child cannot leave at mealtime.
- Entering your child's room or touching them without asking first.
- Sharing personal information without consent.
- Asking your child to keep something secret.
- Talking to you about your child with them present, without acknowledging them or being respectful.
- Talking about your child with other staff or in public spaces without considering who can hear.
- Not having practices in place to ensure privacy and safety. For example, you can see other people in the background if you have a virtual meeting.
- A provider is never allowed to share information about your child with others without your consent.



Questions you can ask your provider

- How will you support my child's privacy with self-care tasks like toileting and dressing? Do you have guidelines on which staff can assist with this?
- Where do you keep my child's records and who has access to them?
- If my child needs support not within your scope of practice, what would you do?

Safety checks

Providers must offer services to NDIS participants in a safe manner with care and skill.

Across Australia, people who work or volunteer with children must be screened for suitability through a Working with Children Check.

This includes checking the person's police information including:

- criminal charges, offences or findings of guilt
- professional conduct reports across the person's lifetime.

A suitable person has a valid Working with Children Check for the state or territory they work or volunteer in.

People who work with NDIS participants can also undergo an NDIS Worker Screening Check; some workers must have a valid NDIS Worker Screening Check clearance to work with participants. An NDIS Worker Screening Check clearance is valid nationally.

The following are examples of what quality practices do and don't look like in early childhood intervention or therapy, along with questions you can ask your provider.



Quality practices do look like

- Individuals have an NDIS Worker Screening Check clearance. This is mandatory for the workers of registered NDIS providers.
- A provider is a registered NDIS provider if providing specialist behaviour supports. These supports include undertaking a behaviour support assessment or developing a behaviour support plan. Registration with the NDIS Commission is mandatory for providers of these supports.
- A provider is a registered NDIS provider if they use or implement regulated restrictive practices as part of a participant's behaviour support plan. Registration with the NDIS Commission is mandatory for providers to use or implement regulated restrictive practice.
- The provider supports training and supervision of staff, such as cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), first aid, emergency planning, and training for any individualised supports your child may need.
- Asking about creating a safety plan for your child when there is a history of suicidal ideation and suicide risk.
- Policies and procedures about safety, worker screening and incident management are available for you to see.
- A process is in place for ensuring any visitor to the provider has the necessary safety checks to work with or around children.



Quality practices don't look like

- Using restrictive practices if they are not a registered NDIS provider.
- Using high risk practices that may cause harm to your child. These include specific forms of physical restraint and punitive approaches.
- A provider is never allowed to provide services without:
 - Working with Children Check when working or volunteering with children.
 - Having professional liability insurance.
 - Meeting the work health and safety laws in their state or territory.



Questions you can ask your provider

- Do you and your workers have a valid Working with Children Check?
- Do you and your workers have an NDIS Worker Screening Check clearance?
- Are you a registered NDIS provider and, if so, for which supports?
- Do you have professional liability insurance?
- Do you have a child safety and wellbeing policy, code of conduct, or rules of behaviour for staff, volunteers and children?
- How do I give feedback or raise concerns if I have them?



Competent and professional services

Providers must provide supports and services to NDIS participants in a competent manner with care and skill. This means that they must be suitably trained, qualified and safe to practice.

The following are examples of what quality practices do and don't look like in early childhood intervention or therapy, along with questions you can ask your provider.



Quality practices do look like

- Staff are registered or hold membership with relevant professional bodies for the supports they provide.
- A provider is a registered NDIS provider if offering specialist behaviour supports such as doing a behaviour support assessment or developing a behaviour support plan. Registration with the NDIS Commission is mandatory for providers of specialist behaviour support in the NDIS.
- A provider is a registered NDIS provider if using regulated restrictive practices as part of a participant's behaviour support plan. Registration with the NDIS Commission is mandatory for providers to use or implement regulated restrictive practice.
- Using information gathered from you and your child, the best available research, and their professional expertise to best support your child and family. This is called evidence informed practice.
- Clearly explaining supports that are and aren't provided based on their qualifications and experiences.
- Helping you find other services when what you require is outside their qualifications and experience.
- With your consent, working with others in your child's team, within their organisation, or with other organisations.
- Providing staff with supervision and training such as through senior therapists and professional development courses.
- Providing accurate information about themselves, what they are qualified and experienced to provide, and the costs.
- Informing you and your child about your rights and their complaints process.



Quality practices don't look like

- Working outside their qualifications or expertise. For example, an occupational therapist advising on strategies that a speech pathologist provides.
- Working in isolation from the rest of your child's team.
- Providers are never allowed to provide services without having the right qualifications and experience to provide supports.
- Providers are never allowed to use a professional title if they are not registered with the relevant professional body.
- Providers are never allowed to make unreasonable claims about the benefits of their supports.



Questions you can ask your provider

- Are you a registered NDIS provider and, if so, for which supports?
- What qualifications, training and experience do you have relevant to the supports my child needs?
- Do you work alone or within a team?
- What types of professionals do you have on your team? Are they registered or members with Australian professional bodies, or are they supervised by someone who is?
- What supervision do your workers receive?
- Can you support our child and family progress towards the goals in my child's NDIS plan?
- Are there other providers who may be better suited to our child and family's needs?
- How do I give feedback or raise concerns?
- What are the costs of your services? Are they aligned with the NDIS Price Guide?
- How long do you think we will need your service?
- How long have you been providing this service?

Early childhood supports

Providers must offer high quality and safe supports and services to NDIS participants.

They must provide early childhood supports that:

- promote and respect a child's rights
- help develop their functional skills
- enable meaningful participation and inclusion in everyday activities with their peers.

Below are examples of what quality practices do and don't look like in early childhood intervention.



Quality practices do look like

- Providing support to you and your child at home in the community and education setting.
- Asking about your child's goals and strengths, and your family's culture, language, values and beliefs.
- Setting goals with you and your child, and providing you a clear timeline of when and how these will be reviewed.
- Working with you to develop strategies that support your child to take part in play, daily activities and routines.
- Asking which other professionals are involved in supporting your child and if they can be contacted so that your child's team are working together.
- Identifying who needs support, coaching or supervision to use strategies with your child such as your family, your child's educators and support workers. They then take the lead to put this in place.
- Using evidence-based assessment tools and regularly measuring progress towards your child's goals and making changes as needed.





Quality practices don't look like

- Recommending hours of therapy that do not balance time to play, rest and do things with family and friends.
- A provider should not use, or give advice to use, a restrictive practice unless they are a registered NDIS provider who may provide this type of service.



Questions you can ask your provider

- How will you respect my family's culture, language, values and beliefs?
- How will you involve me as an important part of my child's team?
- How will you learn about my goals for my child? Will you let me decide what goals to focus on?
- How will you help my child learn about and take part in play, daily activities and routines?
- Can you work in places where my child spends most of their time?
- Will you be able to attend meetings with important people in my child's life like other therapists, educators or teachers with a reasonable notice period?
- How will you share research or recommended strategies with me? This may include if interventions in peer-reviewed journals are effective.
- How will you measure progress of my child's goals over time?

Specialist behaviour support

To provide quality services, providers must offer positive behaviour support appropriate to a child's needs, use evidence-informed practices and follow state and territory laws.

You will need specialist behaviour supports funded in your child's NDIS plan if they need help for any behaviours of concern that include the use of, or need for, regulated restrictive practices.

Positive behaviour support aims to improve your child's quality of life. It also intends to reduce or eliminate the use of restrictive practices.

You must use a [registered NDIS provider for specialist behaviour support](#) if your child has funding for this in their plan. Specialist behaviour supports can only be delivered by behaviour support practitioners under the conditions of registration of these providers.

The NDIS Commissioner considers NDIS behaviour support practitioners suitable if they:

- have learned about behaviour support
- know how to provide it.

Providers of any supports through the NDIS must also be registered with the NDIS Commission to implement regulated restrictive practice as part of a behaviour support plan.

Below are examples of what quality practices do and don't look like in the development and implementation of a behaviour support plan.



Quality practices do look like

- Working with you and your child to understand your child's needs and why behaviour is occurring.
- Developing a behaviour support plan that includes strategies to meet your child's needs and reduce the likelihood of behaviours occurring.
- Working with you and your child to make decisions about the strategies in a behaviour support plan.
- Using a behaviour support plan to outline ways to develop your child's skills and respond to behaviours of concern.
- Having a plan to reduce and eliminate any restrictive practices.
- Working with you when checking on progress and reviewing strategies and goals.
- Understanding and responding to your family's needs and priorities.
- Asking your child if they would like to take part in an activity and respecting their choices.
- Prepares your child for changes to staff or routines.



Quality practices don't look like

- Refusing or ignoring your child's choices.
- Treating your child differently to other children, like using an unfriendly manner.
- Not allowing your child move to another activity until they follow an instruction or finish something.
- Advising use of a restrictive practice when they are not registered for specialist behaviour supports.
- Using restrictive practices that are not included in a behaviour support plan.
- A provider is never allowed to:
 - Force your child to do something they don't want to.
 - Isolate your child from other children for punishment.
 - Use force to take down, hold down or pin down your child, such as bear hugs and basket holds.
 - Not let your child do a desired activity because they refused to do something.
 - Yell at your child.
 - Stop your child from using a body part by restricting it with a strap or garment to develop another body part or skills when no progress is being made.



Questions you can ask your provider

- Are you registered with the NDIS Commission for specialist behaviour support?
- Are you registered with the NDIS Commission to use restrictive practice as part of a behaviour support plan?
- How will you include me and my child in decisions about behaviour supports?
- Will you train other important people in my child's life in using behaviour supports?

Integrity, honesty and transparency

Providers must act with honesty and transparency, and do the right thing.

Below are examples of what quality practices do and don't look like in early childhood intervention or therapy.



Quality practices do look like

- Being clear about work and what you can expect. This should be explained in the provider's service agreement.
- Clearly explaining the service that can be provided and the skills and experience of staff.
- Agreeing with you on the service that will be provided and when.
- Following through on agreed actions in a timely manner and keeping you informed.
- Agreeing with you on the timing and location of appointments including in exceptions when you are not with your child for an appointment, for example a school visit.
- Providing you with a copy of all written reports so you can refer to them and share them with others, such as school or other providers.
- Providing important information like the cost of services and consent forms in a way that is easy to understand.
- Clearly letting you know when they shouldn't provide a support. For example, they may not be qualified or there is a conflict of interest.
- Honestly and respectfully discussing with you why a support is unlikely to be funded by the NDIS and helping you find other ways a need can be met. For example, through mainstream or community services.
- Providing information about how you can raise concerns if you have them.
- Marketing and promoting their services accurately and honestly.



Quality practices don't look like

- Not providing easy to understand information like cost, likely effectiveness of supports, and the risks and benefits of service options.
- Exaggerating positive results about the service.
- Using inappropriate ways to influence your decisions. This could include creating fear of missing out on a place, or saying if you don't do more therapy your child will not catch up.
- Advertising or charging a higher price for NDIS participants than for children who are not NDIS participants, without a valid reason.
- A provider is never allowed to provide inaccurate information about their qualifications and expertise.



Questions you can ask your provider

- How will we communicate?
- How do you resolve conflict?
- How will you ensure service is maintained if a staff member leaves your service?

Who to contact if you have questions, concerns or to make a complaint

Most NDIS providers do their best to provide quality supports and services to people with disability, but issues can occur.

You have the right to:

- ask questions
- seek explanations
- make a complaint.

Speaking up can help improve services for your child and other people.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's current NDIS support, you can talk to any of the following.

Your provider

Sometimes talking to your provider can resolve your questions or concerns.

If you don't get your desired response or things go wrong, you can also make a complaint directly with them.

It is their responsibility to help you feel safe to ask questions or make a complaint without fear of retribution or loss of services.



The NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission (NDIS Commission)

The NDIS Commission is an independent Commonwealth agency established to improve the quality and safety of NDIS supports and services. They can take complaints or questions from anyone about:

- NDIS services or supports not provided in a safe and respectful way
- NDIS services and supports not delivered to an appropriate standard
- how an NDIS provider has managed a complaint about service provided to an NDIS participant.

You can make a complaint to the NDIS Commission or ask questions by:

- completing a [complaint contact form](#)
- calling 1800 035 544.

For more information, visit the [NDIS Commission website](#).

The Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA)

AHPRA ensures Australia's registered health practitioners are suitably trained, qualified and safe to practice.

They can look into safety concerns raised about registered health professionals, students and unregistered people claiming to be health professionals.

You can contact AHPRA by:

- calling 1300 419 495
- submitting an [online enquiry](#)

For more information, visit [AHPRA website](#).

Your my NDIS contact

These contact details can be found on your child's NDIS plan.

An advocate

Advocacy support is for people with disability who face complex challenges.

Family members or carers acting on behalf of people with disability may be able to seek disability advocacy support, as long as there is no conflict of interest.

If you are unable to act, speak or write about a difficult situation on your own, or don't have a support network to help you, then disability advocacy may be an option.

Find an advocate in your area by:

- visiting the [Disability Advocacy Finder](#)
- contacting the [Disability Gateway](#) on 1800 643 787
- searching 'advocates' at the Disability Gateway.

Further assistance

If you need information in a language other than English, contact the Translating and Interpreting Service:

- on the [TIS National](#) website
- by phone for free on 131 450.
- If you are deaf or hard of hearing, contact:
 - TTY on 1800 555 677
 - National Relay Service on 1800 555 727.

Who to contact if there is a risk of immediate or significant harm

Contact the police on 000 for immediate assistance if you are concerned that you, your child or another person is at risk of immediate harm, or someone has been harmed.

Useful links

Decision-making

- [Deciding With Support – Holistic supported decision-making toolkit designed for people with disability, supporters, practitioners and service providers \(flinders.edu.au\)](http://flinders.edu.au)
- [Engaging children with disability in supported decision making | Australian Institute of Family Studies \(aifs.gov.au\)](http://aifs.gov.au)
- [Supporting your child with decision-making \(acd.org.au\)](http://acd.org.au)
- [Supporting Autistic Children Guideline | Autism CRC \(autismcrc.com.au\)](http://autismcrc.com.au)

Safety checks

- [Pre-employment and volunteer screening checks | Australian Institute of Family Studies \(aifs.gov.au\)](http://aifs.gov.au)
- [Worker Screening | NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission \(ndiscommission.gov.au\)](http://ndiscommission.gov.au)

Competent and professional services

- [List of registered providers | NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission \(ndiscommission.gov.au\)](http://ndiscommission.gov.au)
- [Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency - Register of practitioners \(ahpra.gov.au\)](http://ahpra.gov.au)
- [Allied health professions - Allied Health Professions Australia \(ahpa.com.au\)](http://ahpa.com.au)
- [Find a Speech Pathologist \(speechpathologyaustralia.org.au\)](http://speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)
- [Parents & carers | Child Safe Organisations \(humanrights.gov.au\)](http://humanrights.gov.au)
- [NDIS Commission Evidence Informed Practice Guide \(ndiscommission.gov.au\)](http://ndiscommission.gov.au)

Early childhood supports


- [NDIS Practice Standards \(ndiscommission.gov.au\)](http://ndiscommission.gov.au)
- [Parents & carers | Child Safe Organisations \(humanrights.gov.au\)](http://humanrights.gov.au)
- [Keeping Our Kids Safe | National Office for Child Safety \(childsafety.gov.au\)](http://childsafety.gov.au)


Specialist behaviour support


- [NDIS Practice Standards \(ndiscommission.gov.au\)](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au)
- [Understanding behaviour support and restrictive practices - for providers \(ndiscommission.gov.au\)](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au)
- [Regulated restrictive practices with children and young people – Easy Read guide \(ndiscommission.gov.au\)](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au)
- [Position Statement – Practices that present high risk of harm to NDIS participants \(ndiscommission.gov.au\)](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au)
- [Participant Fact Sheets for behaviour support \(ndiscommission.gov.au\)](https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au)



National Disability Insurance Scheme

 Website: [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)

 Telephone: 1800 800 110

 Webchat: [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)

Follow us on our social channels



For people who need help with English

 TIS: 131 450

For people who are deaf or hard of hearing

 TTY: 1800 555 677

 Voice relay: 1800 555 727

 National Relay Service: [accesshub.gov.au](https://www.accesshub.gov.au)