

5. Tips from carers on the NDIS

Information for carers in NSW

This fact sheet is written for the family members and friends (**carers**) supporting people with disability living in New South Wales (**NSW**). It provides tips about the NDIS based on advice from carers who have been through it.

*Words in **bold** are explained at the end of this fact sheet.*

What is the NDIS?

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (**NDIS**) is a new system of disability support that is being introduced across Australia. The NDIS aims to give people with disability and their carers more choice and control over the support they have.

- See the fact sheet [What is the NDIS?](#) for more information.

1. Start early

It's never too early to get ready for the NDIS. You can start getting ready even if it hasn't reached your area yet. The fact sheet [How can I prepare for the NDIS?](#) offers some ideas for how to start.

2. Learn the language

The NDIS uses a lot of new words that may be hard to understand. You can get used to these words and learn what they mean by exploring the NDIS website www.ndis.gov.au and by reading this and other Carers NSW [NDIS fact sheets](#). Every fact sheet, including this one, has a section that explains words called *What does that word mean?*

3. Dream big

The NDIS is an opportunity for you and the **participant** to improve your lives. Things don't have to stay the way they are! For example, you don't have to stick with the same service provider. You can try someone new!

Spend time talking with the participant about what could be possible. Your ideas are important, but the NDIS cares most about what the participant thinks. Do your best to find out what *they* want, even if that is different to what *you* want for them. The participant may also need your help to work out what they want, or to explain it to the **planner**.

- The fact sheet [How can I prepare for the NDIS?](#) has some helpful ideas and resources.

4. Remember: you're an expert

You may not be an NDIS expert, but you *are* an expert in caring for the participant. You probably know a lot about their disability and their day to day life. If you are involved in their **planning session**, it is important to share what you know and how you feel with the planner. Sometimes you may disagree with the participant about what they want or need, but your views still matter.

- See the fact sheet [Where do carers fit in the NDIS?](#) for more information.

5. Stand up for yourself

The NDIS focuses on the participant, not the carer. Some planners are very good at listening to carers and respecting their views. Others may not be as good at this. It is important to understand your rights and what you need. If you are not happy with something, say so! If there is something you need, speak up!

- See the fact sheets [Where do carers fit in the NDIS?](#) and [NDIS checklist for carers in NSW](#) for more information.

6. Take your time

If you feel pressured or rushed at any stage, ask for more time. For example, if the planner calls to arrange a meeting and doesn't give you enough notice, say that you can't make it and suggest another time that is better for you. If you are given a form to sign but you don't feel ready, ask to take it home with you and read over it again. Only sign it when you feel comfortable.

7. Keep an open mind

While it is important to stand up for yourself and take your time, try not to be angry or defensive. The best way to get a good result is to be polite, patient and respectful. When sharing your opinion, be firm but calm, and willing to listen and negotiate. Remember that the goal of the NDIS is to make life easier, not harder, for you and the participant.

8. Be organised

Keep a record of all your dealings with the NDIS. Write notes where you record the date so you can easily look back and find any information you need. Check what you have written with the planner to make sure you have understood. Keep copies of all important documents.

9. If in doubt, ask

If there is something that you don't understand, or something that you need to change, call the **NDIA**. If you have a planner, you can also talk to them. They can be busy and difficult to get a hold of sometimes, but responding to your questions and concerns is part of their job. Don't give up if they don't get back to you straight away. Try again! In an emergency, you can also contact your service provider.

10. Never give up

If you're not happy with the way things are going, try to work it out with the people involved. If you still can't get a solution, don't give up. There are several ways you can complain and appeal.

- See the fact sheet [What if I have a problem with the NDIS?](#) for more information.

Where can I find out more?

You can find this and other fact sheets for carers on the NDIS page of the Carers NSW website: www.carersnsw.org.au/ndis.

For more information on the NDIS and how it works, call the NDIA on 1800 800 110 or visit the NDIS website, www.ndis.gov.au. To speak to someone about the NDIS in a different language call the Translating and Interpretation Service (TIS) on 131 450.

What does that word mean?

carers – family members or friends who provide support to a person with disability.

NDIA – the National Disability Insurance Agency, an agency set up and funded by the Australian Government to run the NDIS.

NDIS – the National Disability Insurance Scheme, a new system of disability support that is being introduced across Australia.

NSW – New South Wales.

participant – a person with disability who has a plan and funded supports from the NDIS.

planner – the person from the NDIA who works with a participant to create a plan.

planning session – a meeting where the planner, the participant and any other person the participant chooses talk about making the participant's plan.

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