

Documents to help you access the NDIS

If you need access to the NDIS, it is important that your documents have information relevant to the NDIS access criteria.

This fact sheet is for people seeking access to the NDIS. It may help you to prepare an access request or an appeal of a decision by the NDIA to not give you access to the NDIS.

It is not enough for you, your family or even your treating health professional to say you are eligible to access the NDIS.

The NDIA is a government body and must apply the rules in the law to decide if you can access the NDIS. Personal statements and therapist reports, which address the eligibility criteria in the NDIS Act and the NDIS (Becoming a Participant) Rules are needed to help the NDIA properly assess your eligibility to become an NDIS participant.

The NDIA may also use the Operational Guidelines to help make decisions about who will be eligible to access the NDIS. Sometimes the Guidelines do not match the Act and the Rules, and if that happens, the Act and the Rules have priority over the Guidelines.

What are the criteria for access?

To be eligible to access the NDIS, you must:

- Meet the [age requirements](#) (aged under 65 at the time of application),
- Meet the [residency requirements](#),
- Meet the [disability requirements](#) OR the [early intervention requirements](#).

It is most common for people to access the NDIS based on the **disability requirements**.

To meet the disability requirements a person must show:

- a** they have an impairment,
- b** the **impairment is (or is likely to be) permanent**,
- c** the impairment causes **substantially reduced functional capacity**,
- d** the impairment impacts the person's social and/or economic participation, and
- e** the person is likely to require support under the NDIS for their lifetime.

See our [Frequently Asked Questions on NDIS access fact sheet](#) for more detail about these.

What documents do I need?

The NDIA most often refuses access to the NDIS because they are not satisfied:

- the person's impairment is permanent, and/or
- the impairment causes substantially reduced functional capacity.

It is important you give the NDIA documents which can show you meet these requirements.

Good documents to give to the NDIA include:

1 A Statement of Lived Experience: this is a statement from you that helps paint a picture for the NDIA about your impairment and how it impacts you. It should cover all areas of your life, both inside, and outside of, your home. The more detail and examples you give, the better. You can find our [template for lived experience statement here](#).

2 Carer Statement: this is a statement from people who support you. It is important as they can also help paint a picture for the NDIA about the impact of your impairment, and if relevant, how you rely on them to complete daily tasks. The more detail and examples provided about the help carers provide, the better.

You can find our [template for carers statement here](#).



3 Professional reports: to satisfy the NDIA your impairment is permanent, you will need professional reports from your general practitioner, medical specialists and/or therapists to explain you have tried all appropriate treatments, such as surgery, medication, and therapies, and there are no treatments available to you which would remedy (cure or substantially relieve) your impairment.

Generally, you will need a report which describes:

- your diagnosis history,
- the treatments (including current treatment/s) you have tried, and the benefits, if any, of the treatments on you, and
- the professionals' opinion about whether there are any other treatments you may try, and if so, what impact they may have on you.

You can find our [template for letter to request a report here](#).



4 Functional Capacity Assessment: a comprehensive Functional Capacity Assessment is generally completed by an occupational therapist who assesses your function and ability to complete self-care and other day-to-day activities in and around your home. This type of assessment is often required by the NDIA to help determine if your impairment causes a substantial reduction in your functional capacity. It is important that the assessment is based on direct observations by the assessor rather than self-reports by the person seeking access to the NDIS.

You may wish to pay your own therapist to do an assessment, or you may ask the NDIA to engage an appropriately qualified therapist and pay for a functional capacity assessment on your behalf.

Early intervention - my impairment is permanent but I am not sure I have substantially reduced functional capacity?

If you think you may not meet the criteria for a substantial reduction in your functional capacity, but your impairment is permanent, you might be able to access the NDIS if early intervention of support could lessen the impact of your impairment.

Speak to your GP or specialist about the benefit of early intervention supports and whether they could:

- lessen the impact of your impairment,
- improve or prevent a deterioration of your functional capacity, or
- strengthen the sustainability of your informal supports.

If yes, then your GP and specialist should write a report which sets out how supports will help into the future to lessen the impact of your impairment.

You can find questions about early intervention supports which you may want to ask your medical practitioners in our [template letter here](#).

Who pays for professional reports and assessments?

When you are at the AAT, if you can not afford to pay for the reports you need, you may ask the NDIA to provide financial assistance to help you cover the costs ([section 6 of the NDIS Act](#)).

However, the NDIA generally prefer to pay their own experts rather than a person's treating practitioners.



Now I have all the information, what next?

Review your documents to check that, together, they address the relevant criteria and rules.

You may do this by using our [Table of Evidence tool here](#). You may wish to complete this table and provide it to the NDIA as a record of the documents on which you are relying.

If you identify gaps in your evidence, consider asking the NDIA what further information they think will be helpful. See our [Navigating an NDIS Appeal fact sheet](#) for more information about independent assessments.

Where can I get help with NDIS access?

Ask Izzy

You can find an advocate using Ask Izzy's disability advocacy finder.

 askizzy.org.au

Legal Aid

You can seek advice from a Legal Aid lawyer if you have an appeal at the AAT.

 [1300 65 11 88](tel:1300651188)  legalaid.qld.gov.au

Our NDIS service at QAI

Our NDIS Support Service gives advice to people on reviews and appeals of NDIA decisions.

 [1300 130 582](tel:1300130582)  qai@qai.org.au  qai.org.au

This fact sheet has been written by Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion (QAI), an independent, community-based systems and advocacy organisation for people with disability in Queensland.

This publication is for general information only. It must not be relied on as legal advice. You must seek legal advice about your own particular circumstances.