

Identifying & Setting Goals for your NDIS Plan



Your NDIS Goals

Your National Disability Insurance Scheme goals are the guiding light of your NDIS plan. They are the benchmarks you set for yourself and are the vision of how you want to improve your life through the NDIS. They are also important because they define the outcomes you want, and any funding you receive will be tied to these outcomes.

Learning about what exactly goals are and identifying and setting effective goals will help you prepare for your NDIS plan. Having a good understanding of goals may even give you a fresh perspective on your current situation and where you want to be in the future.

On this page, we will guide you through the ins and outs of NDIS goals and help you better understand what they are all about.

What is an NDIS Goal?

An NDIS goal is a statement that clearly describes an outcome that you want to achieve. The outcomes can be short-term goals that contribute to improvements in your day to day living, such as communication or greater independence. Long-term goals are also encouraged and can lead to more extensive milestone achievements like learning to drive or getting a new job.

Think of individual goals as a picture of where you want to be at a particular point in time. A good term goal will have a clear outcome that is easy to measure and can be reached by following a set of directions.

What are the different types of NDIS Goals?

NDIS goals are not just one type and can be short, medium, to long-term goals. The types of goals you set are up to you, and your local area coordinator and support workers can help you set and reach them.

An excellent way to think about the types of personal goals is to look at different areas of your life and try and decide where you would like improvements.

Consider things like your home life, relationships, health and wellbeing, work, community participation, daily living, learning and choice and control.

Do you want easier access to your kitchen to prepare meals? Or perhaps you want to take up some community sport? It's really up to you what you would like to achieve!

It is common for participants to list about 2-3 short-term goals which are usually achievable within 12 months and before your next plan review. While it's also desirable to plan out 2-3 medium to long-term goals that can be achieved over the course of 2-10 years' time.

Why are NDIS Goals important?

Goals are essential for a couple of main reasons.

One is that they help you better understand what you want to achieve in your life.

They can help you create a plan that is focused on what makes the most sense to you and your life.

Secondly, goals are essential because they are connected to funding. How much funding you receive will depend on the type and length of your goals and whether they are related to your NDIS plan.

How do you identify your NDIS Plan Goals?

Identifying goals may come easy for some who know what they want, but it is a challenge for most of us.

Start by identifying any current goals you already have and writing them down, how you think you can achieve them and how long you think it will take. That's a great starting point for most of us, and often just writing things down can be the first step to making a goal a reality.

However, some goals and parts of our life that need improvement are harder to identify. That's where the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) has set up a framework for people to identify their goals.

The Eight Domains of Achieving Goals framework was developed by NDIA to help people with their goals. The framework is broken down into eight domains which are listed below.

Choice and Control

- Ability to make choices and control what happens in your life, including your finances and support choices

Communication & Relationships

- Ability to communicate with others, including your family, friends, work colleagues and NDIS staff & support workers

Daily Living

- Ability to live independently on a day to day basis through improved daily living skills

Lifelong Learning

- Develop goals towards continuing education throughout your life

Home

- Improve the conditions of your home to suit your specific needs to improve living standards, access and independence

Social and Community Participation

- Gain greater community access programs and support for increased participation within the community and develop social skills

Work

- Develop and improve your chances of finding, keeping and ascending within the workforce

Health and Wellbeing

- Maintain and improve your health and wellbeing through exercise and a healthy diet

Sit down and think about each of the eight domains. Decide on your own or with the help of a family member or support worker if there are areas you may want to improve.

You don't necessarily need to identify goals for each area, but it is up to you. Also, some areas may not come naturally to you, or you might know you want to improve a particular domain but are unsure about specifics.

For examples of goals that the NDIS is looking for, don't set a broader goal. For instance, if you struggle with preparing your own meals, don't write down 'I want to get better at cooking'. Write something like 'I want to be able to independently prepare each of my meals every day of the week'.

Identify areas you want to improve and get specific about what you want to achieve. But remember, these goals are for you and can be big, small and anything in between.

How to set your NDIS Goals?

Once you have identified your goals, it's time to decide how you want to achieve them.

Write down all the steps you need to take to achieve your goal. Think about what supports you might need and whether they will be provided through your NDIS plan or not.

This is where your support coordinator, local area coordinator (LAC), or support workers can help you. They will be able to provide more information on their roles in coordinating some of your goals with your plan.

Remember that your NDIS funding is tied to your goals, so your LAC or support coordinator can help you decide what is most important to you and how to best reach them with the funding options available.

How do you record your NDIS Goals?

Recording your goals takes place within your NDIS plan and can be done by yourself but are often recorded by a support coordinator or LAC.

Your plan manager or LAC will work with you to make sure your goals fit the NDIS goals criteria, and they will help you set goals in your plan within the participant statement.

While care coordinators and LAC's are essential in helping you understand your goals and the limitations around funding, your goals are always set by yourself.

How will you pursue your NDIS Goals?

Now you've identified, set and recorded your goals, it's time to get after them! You and your support network will likely have gone through the steps required to reach your goal during the initial planning meeting.

It's time to write out the steps and begin putting plans in motion to reach your goals.

Let's say one of your goals is to take up a community sport that caters for limited mobility participants. Your goal plan might read a little like this:

Goal: Over the course of my plan, I would like to participate in a community sport.

- I will find out what are the types of sports that might be accessible to me
- I will communicate with the sports staff to see if they have any availability and ask for advice
- I will assess any gaps in capabilities that I may have in playing the sport
- I will identify the logistical difficulties in arriving on time at the correct location

How will you be supported to pursue your NDIS Goals?

Support to reach your goals can come in many forms and not just from the NDIS. Once you're ready to really get after your goals, you can assess the supports that may be available to you and are relevant to your goals. These supports could be members of the community, family or friends, as well as your support workers and plan managers.

Continuing from the playing sports goals, your support plan may look like this:

Goal: I want to play community sport

How I will be supported:

- My support worker will help me research and assess suitable sports that may be available to me
- The local sports club will provide specialised transport services that can be funded through the NDIS
- I will apply for funding with the help of my support worker for the sports equipment that I need

How your NDIS Goal progress will be assessed by the NDIS?

Outcomes are significant to the NDIS and are often used to measure how successful your plan is.

As your goals progress, you are expected to provide updates and track any progress that you've made along the way.

If you haven't been making much progress, don't worry, you can always assess and change your goals at any time.

What is the difference between Local Area Coordinator (LAC), Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI), NDIA Planner, Support Coordinators & Plan Manager?

During your NDIS journey, there are many support services that can help you get the most out of the NDIS and ensure you can reach your goals. However, it can get a little confusing as to which services you should be working with and what each of them does!

Here is a breakdown of some of the critical services that may help you navigate through the NDIS.

A Local Area Coordinator (LAC)

Local Area Coordinators are NDIA partner organisations that ensure the NDIS works for people in their local area. They can help you with your NDIS plans, review your plan if need be and even help you navigate the NDIS system.

The real strength of a LAC is its ability to connect individuals with NDIS providers in their local area with knowledge about the different disability services available in the community. Your Local Area Coordinator is your go-to organisation for NDIS information and will help you as much as they can.

People often approach LAC if they meet all the requirements to become an NDIS participant, and they will be the ones to work with you to develop your plan, help submit it and track any progress you make along the way.

Common ways a LAC may also help you:

- Linking you to your provider of choice
- Is the central community hub for access to community services
- Providing information on training opportunities for people with disabilities
- Assisting you with accessing the NDIS online system if needed (to get your plan accepted)
- Acting as a liaison between you and your personal care providers where required
- Providing information on how to access specialist services
- Reviewing your plan if need be (for you)
- Helping you find services in the community such as transportation, interpreters, and individual skill development
- Providing you with any other information you may need about your NDIS journey

NDIA Planner

An NDIA Planner works directly for the NDIA and will be responsible for approving plans for participants. They will work with your LAC to ensure that your goals and plan details are adhering to NDIA procedures. Whilst they'll also assess which supports and funding options will be available under the current legislations and regulations.

Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI)

The ECEI is an NDIS initiative that links support organisations to families to care for children within local areas. The Early Childhood Early Intervention service supports children from birth to six years of age and their families. The services that the ECEI provides is very similar to that of the local area coordinator. Similarly, the Early Childhood Early Intervention will provide support to the family by referring to the appropriate resource or agencies to manage their child's disabilities. The ECEI will also offer services to families who are living with complex needs. This includes individuals with disabilities, learning disabilities, behaviours, emotional/behavioural issues and special needs.

Support Coordinator

A Support Coordinator is a private business that someone might employ to help them better understand their plan and what services are available to them. Think of a support coordinator as a bit of a coach. They will work with you to get the most out of yourself, your plan and the funding available to you.

What sets a support coordinator apart from a LAC is that they work directly for you, the participant.

Some of the things they help people with are:

- Setting goals and tracking progress
- Helping set up each needed service
- Itinerary planning for travel to attend as many as possible of the activities you wish to attend
- Retaining your medical files and paperwork that might be filed away
- Increasing quality of daily life
- Helping track your medications and ensure you are taking them as prescribed
- Helping you understand why you have been declined access to some of the services you are entitled to under the plan
- Helping you understand the benefits and where they apply to you
- Helping you understand that some plans have limits, and these limits may be unfair
- Delivering reports to the NDIS
- Help with increasing community participation

A support coordinator will work with you to help you better understand your plan and get the most out of the services provided through the NDIS.

Plan Manager

If your support coordinator is your coach, your plan manager is your accountant. A plan manager manages all your plan funds and works with you to ensure all the services are paid for and within budget.

Some of the things a plan manager might do include:

- Meet with you and your support coordinator to gather information and discuss your plan
- Work with you to monitor your compliance with the plan and assess the plan's effectiveness
- Work with and assist your support coordinator in ensuring you are getting the service you require
- Delivering payment to the providers directly out of your plan budget
- Retaining important financial papers
- Maintaining accurate records of funding, services and disbursements
- Take the pressure off of economic life
- Will negotiate with confidence to get the best arrangements from providers

The great benefit of having a plan manager is that you don't have to worry about meeting funding regulations, and it gives you more options when choosing the right providers for you.

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