



## Preparing for and attending your child's NDIS meeting Tips

**Planning for your child's NDIS meeting involves thinking about goals and supports, organising reports and attending the meeting as a champion for your child. We asked families to share their top tips for preparing for and attending their child's planning meeting.**

### Information gathering

Get as much information and data as you can to take in to your planning meeting, talk to as many people as you can and ask as many questions as you beforehand. For example, understand the type of services and programs you can ask for, know what areas your child needs support in. Support pages on Facebook and other families are a great place to get information.

### Reports to support funding requests

It is important to have reports and/or quotes from specialists that support your goals or request for equipment or resources. The reports provide a justification as to why it is needed and how it will help your child meet their goal.

### Self, plan or agency managed

You need to let the planner know in the meeting if you will be self, plan or agency managed. This is an important decision as it determines the flexibility you will have with your child's plan. Do your research ahead of time. There are lots of great resources on the NDIS website that explain the different management options. Also ask around in your networks.

### Don't go alone

Take someone along with you, whether it is a family member, friend, or someone who knows your child. Before the meeting, decide on what their role is in the meeting and how they can support you. These meetings can be long and emotionally draining. It's helpful to have someone else to debrief with afterwards.

### Think about goals ahead of time

Think about and write your goals down ahead of time. Don't worry too much about the wording of the goals. They should morph through the planning meeting based on the conversation and reports provided. It's great to go prepared with goals but be prepared to be flexible. Sometimes things come out of the planning discussion that add a new element to your goals. Ask around to find out what supports and strategies are families are using as often we can have similar goals for our children.

### Get reports done early

It is important to allow enough time to get reports from therapists and other specialists. Make sure your team know when your plan ends and when your next planning meeting is scheduled. Reports need to include progress made, so this gives you an opportunity to think about achievements during the year. Getting reports done early also gives you time to check them over and make sure all the information is correct and if any points are missing. You can totally go back to therapists and ask for changes or corrections if they are needed.

### Prepare questions beforehand

It can be easy in the meeting to forget important questions you want to ask. Write them all down beforehand. These questions may include how long after the meeting will i receive the plan or when will you submit the paperwork in case i need to make changes or send extra reports.





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### Low risk assistive technology

You can request funding to purchase simple, low risk products that are easy to buy and need no or very little assistance to set up and use. These could include sensory items, bath mats, apps. An assessment or report isn't needed for these items, but you may be asked to provide a justification so it is helpful to think ahead of time what resources would help your child to achieve their goals and how it would help.

### Prepare a carers impact statement

This statement provides the NDIA planner with a holistic view into your child's disability and what it means for their everyday life and for your family. It's an opportunity to share information that isn't always captured in the goals, and areas of development. It may be around the impact on the family, sibling relationships, or financial hardships.

It is also great to put your argument forward for funding needs. And an opportunity to thank the NDIA for the support their child received over the past 12 months.

The NDIS planner is collecting the information and making recommendations to the NDIA planners, who are the decision maker that we don't meet, but make the plan funding decision at the end of the day. Carers statement is also a way of that decision maker hearing your voice.

### Your child doesn't need to attend

Some planners say your child must be attend the meeting. This is not true. It is the parents' choice. Some families choose not to bring their child as the discussion tends to focus on the deficits and parents prefer not to speak about their child in that way in front of them.

### Progress vs ongoing needs

Think about progress made vs ongoing needs. This can feel like 'walking a tightrope'. You will need to document progress made over the year towards each goal in the plan. Then you need to think about where your child is at now, and what skills they still need to develop. It can help to look at their peers and what they are doing now, to identify areas of need.

### Prepare for after the plan meeting

Have a plan for yourself following the planning process. As a parent or carer, it can be hard focusing on the negatives or 'skill deficits' of your child! Think about how you are advocating for your child, rather than focusing on the negatives. After the process, make space for yourself to 'recover' and shift your thinking back to how amazing your child is, the progress they have made, and their strengths. It may be catching up with a friend for a coffee and debrief.

### Rethink agency management

Why is that important, you ask? If you are Agency Managed, you can ONLY use registered providers. Sometimes it's going to mean you can't use a therapist you want. It also means you can't buy your child's nappies at the supermarket. And you have less flexibility, choice and control that you would like.

### A nod to the NDIA outcomes

When thinking about goals, and communicating with the NDIA planners in a Carers Statement, it can help pack a punch if you can show how you and your child are working towards outcomes like becoming more independent, creating friendships, improving skills, strengthening family relationships, and working towards an inclusive 'ordinary' life.

