

Planning and goal setting for parents of children with disability

Introduction

Formal planning and goal setting can be unfamiliar concepts for parents. Most parents of young children don't have to think about setting goals or planning beyond typical family life, but when a child has a disability parents are asked about planning and goals by service providers, funding bodies, case managers, and the NDIS, amongst others.

This Quick Guide highlights key things that may help parents prepare for a child's planning meeting with the NDIS, and/or areas that your peer network may want to talk about.

Let's make it happen

Knowing what you and your child would like to work towards in their life is the important first step in preparing your child's plan and working out what supports they might need to help address the impact of their disability. Parents, as 'experts' in their own children, can be reassured that they can set achievable goals too.

Here are some starting points:

1. **Most parents have skills in planning and goal setting:** If you have ever planned a holiday, a birthday party, or navigated your way through Centrelink – these are all activities which require research, analysis, planning, and goal setting. These skills can be transferred to how parents can approach disability related needs.
2. **Identify what supports your child has now:** Think about how your child is supported now and for what reasons. Consider what you might like to change or how it could be done better. This includes family, friends and other informal supports, as well as mainstream, community and disability supports.
3. **This is a useful framework for starting to think about goals for a child:**
 - What are your child's strengths, likes, and interests - this information is useful to identify goals for social and recreational activities, community access, skill development, and other areas.
 - What is typical for a child of the same age? - this may be useful to help you come up with ideas for age related interests and social activities, as well as thinking about skill development (e.g. – most 10 year olds can get dressed independently. Where you have been supporting your child with dressing – would you and your child like support for your child to develop these skills, as well as giving your child some independence from parents?)

QuickGuide

- Align your goals to the NDIS Outcomes Framework

4. *The NDIS Outcomes Framework:* For NDIS purposes, the goals which are set must be aimed at an *outcome*. There are 8 categories of outcomes in the NDIS Outcomes Framework:

- Daily Living
- Social & Community Participation
- Home
- Choice and Control
- Work
- Relationships
- Health and Wellbeing
- Lifelong learning

NDIS goals should relate to outcomes in one or more of these areas.

Supports that maintain a carer's health and wellbeing will also be considered. This support may include participation in a support group or a special interest network. In deciding whether to fund or provide a support, the NDIA will take account of what it is reasonable to expect families, carers, informal networks and the community to provide.

- 5. *Use your peer support:*** It is good to get familiar with the words and ideas that might go into an NDIS plan. Ask other parents who have gone through it about what worked and what didn't.
- 6. *Be creative:*** If a family is self-managing then they can use all sorts of ways to meet a child's goals. It doesn't have to be through traditional service providers. See the other Quick Guides on self-managing and finding and employing support workers.
- 7. *Self-care:*** Sometimes discussions that focus on your child's disability can bring up strong emotions. Talking about this in your peer group can give you some ideas about how other members of the group deal with this. You might need to take some time out for yourself. It can be hard work advocating for your child.

Where you can find more information

There are numerous planning and goal setting tools available on line and in hard-copy.

The Association for Children with a Disability (ACD) has developed an NDIS Planning workbook which is available to download from their website:

www.acd.org.au

<http://acd.org.au/acd-ndis-support-2/ndis-planning-workbook/>

Carers Australia has good information about the NDIS and Carers

<http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/ndis-and-carers/what-is-the-ndis/>

The NDIS website has a useful checklist which will help you develop your child's NDIS participant statement:

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/planning-process/developing-childs-plan>

Plumtree is a not-for-profit organisation that provides support for young children aged birth to 8 years old with a developmental delay or disability and their families. This blog looks at a new way to plan and set goals for children with a disability.

<http://plumtree.org.au/blog-post-1/>

Autism Queensland has developed a family goal setting tool available on its website

<https://autismqld.com.au/page/the-family-goal-setting-tool-fgst>

Co-authored by [Association for Children with a Disability](#)

