



Thriving Kids

The Australian Government is restoring the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) to its original purpose—supporting people with permanent and significant disability—and ensuring the Scheme remains sustainable.

Reforms announced by Minister Butler on 20 August 2025 will secure the future of the Scheme and put people with disability and their families back at the centre of the NDIS.

Establishing an effective national system of support for parents and children outside the NDIS is an important part of these reforms.

The Australian Government has announced its commitment to contribute \$2 billion towards Thriving Kids, commencing from 1 July 2026.

The final program design will be settled between the Australian Government and state and territory governments, informed by experts and the significant community input received through the Independent Review of the NDIS, and the Thriving Kids Advisory Group co-chaired by Professor Frank Oberklaid.

Overview

Thriving Kids will focus on identifying developmental concerns earlier and establishing a national system of supports for children aged 8 and under with mild to moderate developmental delay and autism, and their families. Children with permanent and significant disability will continue to be supported through the NDIS.

The program will be delivered by scaling and building on existing mainstream and community services that can better support families and children in settings they already are connected to. This includes child and maternal health, GPs, playgroups, early childhood education and care and schools, as well as digital and phone-based supports.

There are already many examples of evidence-based services that guide parents and help their kids thrive. The Government will work to leverage those existing systems, such as the infant and maternal health systems that states run, the primary care systems that the Commonwealth funds through Medicare and supports in community health centres. These supports will help children to thrive, right through the life course, from the time they're born, into the time they get into formal schooling. This would include supporting the parent or carers with routines and advice on things they can do at home and what their child may need in other everyday environments where they learn and play.

Shaping these supports

The Government will work with state and territory governments and experts to finalise the design and implementation arrangements for Thriving Kids.

Design is being informed by the findings of the Independent Review into the NDIS, national consultation on Foundational Supports held at the end of 2024 and continuing community consultation across multiple jurisdictions.

Minister Butler will establish the Thriving Kids Advisory Group, co-chaired by Professor Frank Oberklaid. This will provide expert advice to the Minister around the program design and implementation arrangements over the coming months. It will help to ensure the design looks at how to best support child development from a national system perspective. It will consider findings from the NDIS Review, as well as the broader evidence base.

Timeline

The Government will continue to prioritise work with state and territory governments to finalise the design of Thriving Kids program this year.

It is expected the Thriving Kids program would rollout in phases. The first services are expected to be available from 1 July 2026 and would continue to ramp up over 12 months.

This will ensure national services are in place ahead of broader changes to NDIS access arrangements from mid-2027.

Relationship to NDIS Reform

The Australian Government is focused on ensuring children with developmental delay or disability, who can be better supported outside of the NDIS, have access to services and supports that help them to thrive. This will help to ensure that the NDIS remains sustainable and can support people with permanent and significant disability for generations to come.

Children who are already on the Scheme will continue to receive supports, subject to usual arrangements, including reassessments.

Reforms to NDIS access, and establishment of additional supports outside the NDIS, will be carefully designed with early childhood experts and families. Reforms will carefully consider impacts on existing participants including timing and transition arrangements for children.

We will continue to put people with disability at the heart of NDIS reforms and ensure that children with significant and permanent care and support needs who require the NDIS continue to be supported.