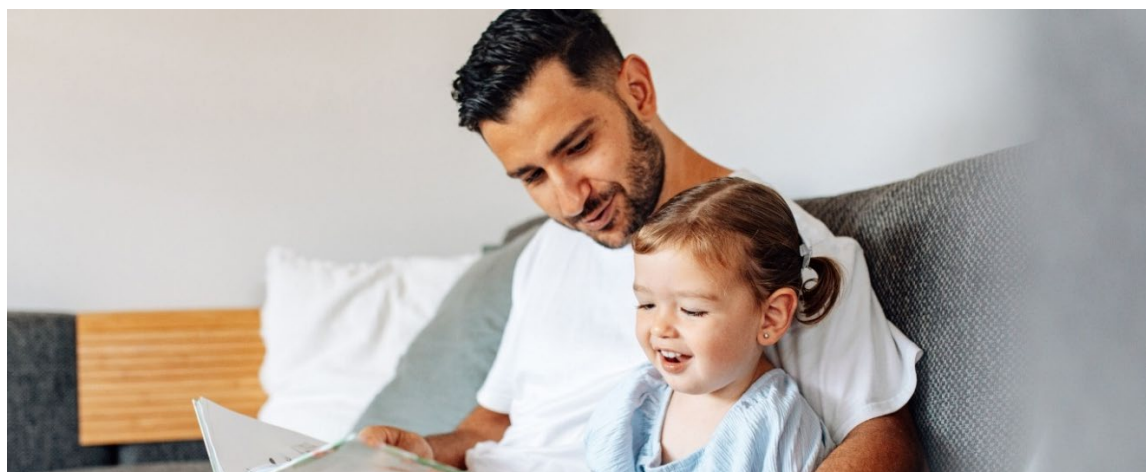




Thriving Kids



Updated as at 17 October 2025

The Australian Government is working with states, territories, experts and the community to design and implement reforms to information, programs and services for children with developmental difference, delay or disability and their families. The reforms are focused on ensuring children and their families are well supported and able to thrive.

The Independent Review into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (the Review) recommended a new system of supports for children outside the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The Review called for improved accessible and inclusive mainstream supports, investment in more development- and disability-specific supports, and a new NDIS early intervention pathway for children.

The Review found that developmental differences and delays are not always identified early in a child's life, when early intervention can make a big difference. Once identified, many children and families struggle to get the support they need, when they need it most.

Thriving Kids will seek to deliver supports for children outside the NDIS and their families, to support their development. Thriving Kids will focus on identifying developmental differences or delays earlier and establishing additional mainstream and community supports nationally for children aged 8 and under with developmental delay and disability with low to moderate support needs, and their families. Children with significant and permanent disability support needs will continue to be supported through the NDIS.



The reform will be delivered by scaling and building on existing services that can better support families and children in settings they already are connected to. There are already many examples of evidence-based services that guide parents and help their kids thrive. These include:

- child and maternal health services run by states and territories
- GPs and community health centres overseen by the Commonwealth
- early childhood education and care; schools; and digital and phone-based information services where all governments, the community sector and the private sector are involved.

Expanding and building on these mainstream and community supports to establish a connected national system will help children from infancy into their school years so they thrive.

Shaping these supports

The Australian Government is working with state and territory governments and experts to finalise the design and implementation arrangements for Thriving Kids.

Minister Butler has established the Thriving Kids Advisory Group, co-chaired by Professor Frank Oberklaid. This group 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 and feed into engagement between the Australian Government and states.

The Advisory Group will consider findings from the Review, national consultations on Foundational Supports held at the end of 2024, the House Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Disability inquiry into Thriving Kids and views from stakeholder networks.

Timeline

The Australian Government will continue to prioritise work with state and territory governments to finalise the design of the 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 difference, 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 significant and permanent 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.

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

More information

To find out more about Thriving Kids, visit: <https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/thriving-kids>.