



Australian Government

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing



## Fact sheet: Foundational Supports and Thriving Kids

3 February 2026

The Australian Government has reached a landmark agreement with state and territory governments to reform Australia's health and disability systems. As part of this agreement, governments have agreed to put new investment into supports outside the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), known as 'Foundational Supports'.

As a first step, governments will focus on establishing supports for children aged 8 and under with developmental delay and/or autism with low to moderate support needs and their families, known as 'Thriving Kids'.

### A national approach with state and territory governments

National Cabinet has agreed to jointly contribute up to \$4 billion over 5 years to implement supports for children aged 8 and under with developmental delay and/or autism with low to moderate support needs, and their families. The Australian Government is providing \$1.4 billion of its \$2 billion contribution to support states to help their kids thrive.

Governments have agreed that states and territories will deliver general parenting supports, local information, advice and navigation, and targeted allied health supports under Thriving Kids. The Australian Government is responsible for national measures that will enable the program to operate effectively, including information and awareness activities, online and phone advice — including wayfinding assistance, workforce initiatives, and program evaluation.



Governments also agreed to continue to consider the establishment of other Foundational Supports over time. This responds to a recommendation of the Independent Review into the NDIS (the NDIS Review), which called on governments to fund a range of different kinds of supports outside the NDIS. You can find out more about what the NDIS Review called Foundational Supports on [the NDIS Review's website](#).

Governments will undertake a review of Foundational Supports three years after signing of the Thriving Kids bilateral agreements to assess their effectiveness and funding adequacy.

## Thriving Kids national model

Thriving Kids will help give children the best start in life by identifying those with additional developmental needs earlier and connecting them to supports. Children with permanent and significant disability and children aged 8 and under with developmental delay and/or autism who have substantially reduced functional capacity (high support needs) will remain eligible for the NDIS, subject to usual NDIS arrangements.

Governments have agreed there will be a range of different supports available under Thriving Kids. This is expected to include a mix of scaled existing services and new services. Thriving Kids will be provided in the environments where children live, learn and play. It will include supports that help:

- improve awareness of developmental delays
- better identify developmental delays
- parents and families to build their skills, connect with others and find quality information and advice
- connect children and families to 'targeted supports', focused on development and based on level of need.

## Thriving Kids services and supports

### *Information, advice and navigation*

There will be easy-to-access information and advice on child development, and help provided so children and their families can connect with the right supports.

### *Parenting supports and programs*

Families, carers, and kin are the first teachers in a child's life. To support them in this role, some families may benefit from supports that help them build:

- further knowledge and skills to support their child's development
- strong relationships with their children and other people in their lives
- peer support through connections with others who have had, or are going through, the similar experiences.



These supports will acknowledge strengths and goals of children and families. They will be offered in different ways, such as through online courses, short videos, resources families can use at home, peer support groups, supported playgroups, family programs, self-advocacy supports, and culturally safe training.

### **Targeted Supports**

Targeted Supports will be available for children and families who need more help than parenting supports and programs alone. This includes things like:

- Developmental supports for children that focus on enhancing functional skills and independence, delivered by trained workers, such as occupational therapists, speech pathologists, physiotherapists, audiologists, and psychologists. This might also include access to low-cost assistive technology, aids or equipment where needed.
- Supports that help families build their child's strengths, navigate key transition points – like entering school – and help when the family is accessing supports from a range of different people under Thriving Kids.

Supports and services will be guided by a range of principles, for example, being informed by evidence, neuro-affirming and child centred and family centred. They will also consider the need of intersectional cohorts such as First Nations people, culturally and linguistically diverse people, LGBTQIA+SB communities and women and girls.

### **Designing Thriving Kids**

The design of Thriving Kids supports has been informed by a number of inputs and community engagement. This includes:

- the Thriving Kids Advisory Group
- findings from the NDIS Review
- national consultations on Foundational Supports held in 2024
- the final report of the House Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Disability inquiry into the Thriving Kids initiative
- engagement with disability representative organisations and the community at a national level and within individual states and territories.

### **Thriving Kids Advisory Group advice**

The Minister for Health and Ageing, and Minister for Disability and the National Disability Insurance Scheme announced the Thriving Kids Advisory Group (the Advisory Group) in August 2025, co-chaired by Professor Frank Oberklaid AM. The Advisory Group provided expert advice to governments on how to ensure the design can best support child development from a national system perspective. This advice will help inform



ongoing design and implementation activities of governments. You can view their advice on the [department's website](#).

## Consultation

Engagement with parents, families, the disability community and relevant sectors will continue over the coming months as governments plan for implementation.

## Timeline

All governments signed a National Agreement on Foundational Supports. The National Agreement sets out how all governments will work together to deliver Foundational Supports.

Agreements between the Australian Government and each state and territory government will set out how governments will deliver Thriving Kids in each state and territory. These agreements are expected to be finalised in February 2026.

The Australian Government and state and territory governments will then work together, and with the community, to support the rollout of Thriving Kids supports this year.

The first state services will be available from 1 October 2026. Services will be progressively scaled and established, with full rollout of services by 1 January 2028. Details around specific services and how to access them will be made available closer to the time of commencement.

## NDIS access arrangements

To support the rollout of Thriving Kids, the Australian Government and all state and territory governments have agreed in principle to change NDIS access arrangements for children.

These changes will ensure children and their families are supported to access services from the system best suited to their needs.

These changes will apply from 1 January 2028. Changes will be limited to children aged 8 and under with developmental delay and/or autism with low to moderate support needs. These children will be supported through mainstream and Foundational Supports.

Children aged 8 and under enrolled in the NDIS prior to 1 January 2028 with developmental delay and/or autism with low to moderate support needs will continue to be subject to reassessment under the eligibility criteria in place prior 1 January 2028.

Children with permanent and significant disability will continue to be eligible for the NDIS, subject to usual NDIS arrangements.

These access changes will require amendments to the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (NDIS Act). The Australian Government will continue to engage state



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and territory governments, people with disability and the disability sector to inform the design and implementation of these important reforms.

## **Foundational Supports**

Governments will continue to consider the establishment of other Foundational Supports over time.

## **More information**

To find out more about Thriving Kids, visit the [department's website](#).