



Australian Government  
Department of Social Services

# Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 – 2031

## Early childhood Targeted Action Plan What we learned in our workshop

An Easy Read report



## How to use this report



The Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) wrote this report with Meld Studios.

Meld Studios is a company that helps people plan better services.



When you see the word 'we', it means DSS.



We wrote this report in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**  
Not bold

We wrote some words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



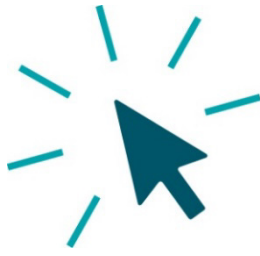
We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page **31**.



This is an Easy Read summary of another report.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find more information on our website.

[www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children-publications-articles/dss-early-childhood-best-practice-workshop-report](http://www.dss.gov.au/families-and-children-publications-articles/dss-early-childhood-best-practice-workshop-report)



You can ask for help to read this report.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.



If you speak a language other than English, you can call Translating and Interpreting Services (TIS).

**1800 131 450**

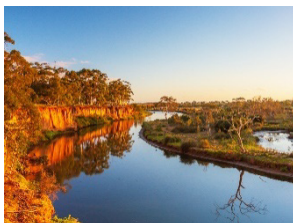


This document includes photos of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It may contain images of people who have passed away.



We recognise First Nations peoples as the traditional owners of the land we live on – Australia.



They were the first people to live on and use the:

- land
- waters.

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## About this report



Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 is a plan to support people with disability in all areas of their life.

In this report we call it the Strategy.



Our Strategy includes Targeted Action Plans, that explain areas we want to focus on.

We call them action plans.



We have an action plan in our Strategy about early childhood.

It explains how we will:



- help young children with disability get the support they need in early childhood



- support services to help parents and carers make choices about children with disability

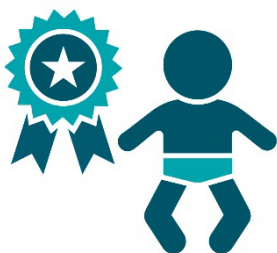


- give parents, carers and children with disability more chances to connect with others.

## Finding out what supports work best



At the moment, people and organisations are giving different supports across Australia.



We plan to find out what best practice is for young children with disability.

This means finding out what supports work best for them.

In this report, we call this best support.



We want to help all services give best support to young children with disability.

## Our workshop



In a **workshop** people talk to each other about a topic.



We ran a workshop to find out what supports work best for young children with disability.



The ideas we heard will help us to better understand what best support is.



Our workshop included 2 sessions.



In the first session, 5 speakers explained their ideas.

And people could ask them questions.



In the second session, everyone worked in small groups to share their ideas.

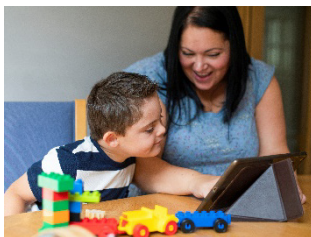


We ran this workshop with the **National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA)**.

The NDIA runs the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).



The NDIS provides services and support to people with disability.



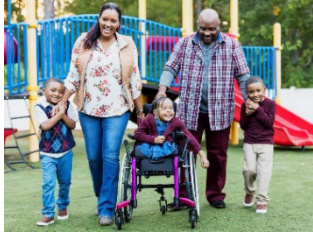
We also worked with Reimagine Australia.

They are an organisation that looks for ways to help children with disability and their families.



## Who took part in the workshop

In the workshop, we heard from:



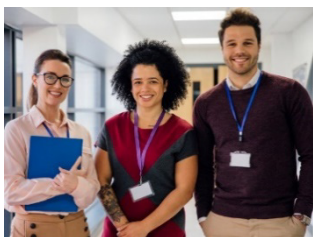
- parents of children with disability



- community organisations



- experts



- **providers** – who support young children with disability by delivering a service.

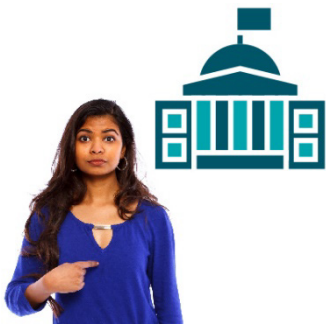
We also heard from people who:



- research best support



- speak up for people with disability



- work in the government.



This report explains the ideas we heard in the workshop.

## Main ideas from the workshop

### What best support looks like



People shared what best support for children with disability should look like.

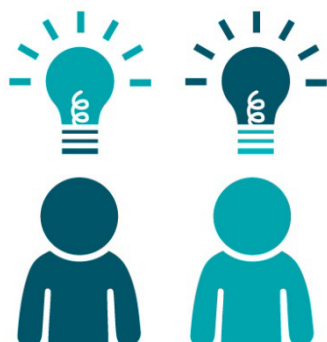


People told us that best support needs to put children and families at the centre of everything it does.



We heard that best support for young children needs to come from **evidence**.

Evidence is proof that something is true.



We also heard that different people and communities have different ideas about what best support looks like.

People told us that best support should:



- change and get better over time



- build on what children and families are good at



- help children and families based on what they need around them



- include everyone, no matter who they are or where they come from.

## The outcomes we want



**Outcomes** are the important results we want to get for people with disability.

People shared their ideas about what outcomes they want for:



- young children with disability



- their families and carers



- the community.



People told us they want families to feel like they have control.



And they want children to feel like they belong in the community.



We also heard that support for young children with disability should be **accessible**.

When support is accessible, it is easy to:



- find and use



- take part in it.



We heard that support should be accessible no matter where people live.

People also told us that they want everyone to give support that is based on:



- what each child needs



- what young children with disability and families can do, not what they can't do.



We also heard that all of Australia needs to work together to deliver best support.

This includes different parts of Australia, like:

- governments
- organisations.

## Barriers that stop people giving best support



We also heard about **barriers**.

A barrier is something that stops people from giving or getting best support.



For example, we heard there aren't enough people with the right skills to give best support.



We also heard there isn't enough **funding** to help providers change the support they give.



Funding is money from the government that pays for services and supports.



People told us that organisations and governments aren't talking to each other.

And they're saying different things about:

- what best support is
- how to deliver it.





We also heard that people's **attitudes** about children with disability are a barrier to best support.

Your attitude is what you think, feel and believe.



We heard that Australia needs to have a shared understanding of:

- what best support is
- what to do to make sure people give best support.



People told us that providers need to do what they say they're going to do.



People also shared that services are hard to use.

## Ways to give best support



People told us about ways that can help us give best support.



And how we can work with other organisations to do this.



We heard that we could work with people who understand what children with disability need.

For example, their families and carers.



We also heard we could test our plans and programs before they start.



People told us we can train people to give best support.

Or make sure people get the right training.



We heard that there isn't just one way to make sure children with disability get best support.

And that we need to use lots of different ways.

## The 5 speakers in the workshop



There were 5 speakers in the workshop.

They shared their ideas about how we can learn what the best support is for young children with disability.

### Sarah Guise



The first speaker was Sarah Guise.

She works for the Department of Social Services (DSS).



She shared that to give best support we need to work with:

- the community
- programs and services.

She shared that we need to understand:



- what supports work well



- what we can do



- what the barriers are.

## Loretta Kingston-Brown

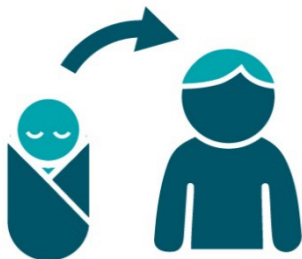


The second speaker was Loretta Kingston-Brown.

She works for the NDIA.



She shared that the NDIA are doing more in the area of early childhood support.



They now want to support children with disability from birth to 14 years old.



She shared the NDIA want to include more young children with disability in **mainstream services**.



Mainstream services are for everybody in the community to use.

## Peter de Natris



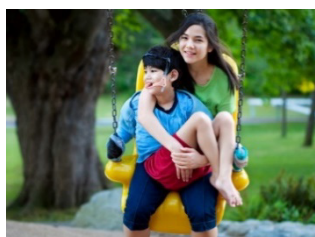
The third speaker was Peter de Natris.

He works for the NDIA.



He shared that most of the plans to support people with disability have been about adults.

And it's a good thing we're focusing on children now.

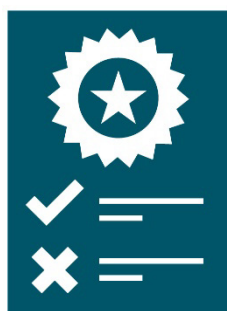


He also shared that states now focus on supporting children with disability:

- outside the home
- in the community.



He said we need to listen to children with disability and their families, not just professionals.



There are guidelines about best support that providers use now.

Peter de Natris shared that we would also need to share any new guidelines with providers.

## Yvonne Keane



The fourth speaker was Yvonne Keane.

She is the leader of Reimagine Australia.



She talked about what they learned from research about families of young children with disability.

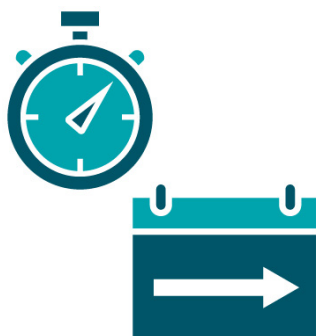


She said they learned what kind of support families need for:

- their children
- themselves.



And she talked about the barriers that families with young children with disability face.



She also shared how important it is to make sure all children with disability get the best support:

- now
- in the future.

## Professor Bruce Bonyhady



The last speaker was Professor Bruce Bonyhady.

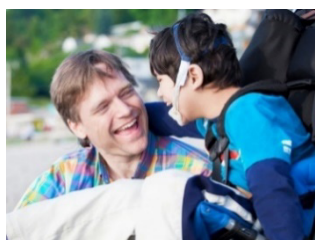
He is one of the leaders of the **NDIS Review**.



The Australian Government is checking the NDIS to find out what:

- works well
- could be better.

They call it the NDIS Review.



Professor Bruce Bonyhady shared that we must support children with disability and their families at:

- home
- school
- in the community.



He also said we need ways to make sure providers deliver the best support.



## Questions that people asked the speakers



People asked the speakers questions.

In this section, we explain the:



- questions people asked



- answers that the speakers gave.



**Will the early childhood action plan support families:**

- while the parent is pregnant?
- before the child is born?



We are doing work in this area.

And we understand it's something we need to think about.



**There are lots of supports happening at clinics.**



**How do we get more supports at home  
or in the community?**



We need to create reasons why people should  
deliver supports in the home or community.

We also need to re-think how we set prices  
for supports.

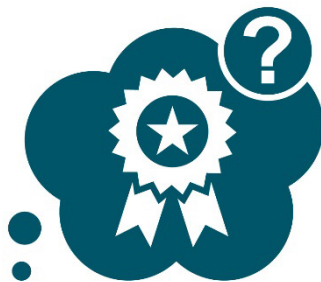


## How can we work more with community organisations?



We already work with many community organisations.

And we would love to work with more in the future.



**My experience of best support is different to what other people say.**

**How can we all agree?**



We will work with experts to learn what works best for young children with disability.

But we can learn from everyone's experiences.

**Some professional health workers:**



- **raise their prices too much**



- **don't have the right skills.**



**Who will help families after these professionals get fired or stop giving support?**



We need funding to focus on the best support for children with disability.

We will need to re-think how funding works.



**How can we stop people in politics from trying to keep children with disability separate from mainstream services?**



This is something we are aware of.

Many parents still think that keeping children with disability separate from mainstream services is best support.

## What we will do next

Now that we've done this workshop, we will find an organisation to:



- research what best support is for children with disability



- work with the community and the government



- share what they find with us and the community.



They will share what they find in different ways.

For example, in:

- different languages
- Easy Read.

## Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



### **Attitude**

Your attitude is what you think, feel and believe.



### **Accessible**

When support is accessible, it is easy to:

- find and use
- take part in it.



### **Barriers**

A barrier is something that stops people from giving or getting best support.



### **Evidence**

Evidence is proof that something is true.



## **Funding**

Funding is money from the government that pays for services and supports.



## **Mainstream services**

Mainstream services are for everybody in the community to use.



## **National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA).**

The NDIA runs the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).



## **NDIS Review**

The Australian Government is checking the NDIS to find out what:

- works well
- could be better.



They call it the NDIS Review.





## Outcomes

Outcomes are the important results we want to get for people with disability.



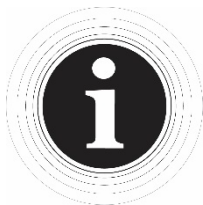
## Providers

Providers who support young children with disability by delivering a service.



## Workshop

In a workshop people talk to each other about a topic.



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