

Early childhood approach



This booklet covers:

- the NDIS early childhood approach
- what is an early childhood partner?
- setting goals for your child
- getting supports and services for your child.





Welcome

We are providing this booklet to help you understand the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) early childhood approach. We want you to feel supported and informed as we begin this journey together.

You can work through this booklet with your early childhood partner and take it to additional meetings with others who support you. Early childhood partners deliver early childhood services for children younger than 7 and their families.

NDIS key words: Some words we use to talk about the NDIS might be new to you, so we explain them along the way. These words are in **purple** text.

Examples: In this book examples start with the words 'For example'.

The NDIS

The NDIS is a national scheme that helps people with **disability**.

This includes helping children with **developmental delay**, **developmental concerns** or disability through our early childhood approach.

More information about the NDIS is available on the NDIS website at [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au).

NDIS key words:

Disability

A disability is a lifelong physical, sensory, cognitive or psychosocial impairment that significantly affects an individual's ability to participate in everyday activities.

Developmental delay

A developmental delay is when a child's development is not at the level expected for their age and has a significant effect on their ability to perform daily routines and activities.

Developmental concern

A developmental concern means that there are delays in your child's development that don't fully meet the NDIA's definition of developmental delay. These delays may impact the everyday activities your child can do when compared with children of the same age.

The NDIS early childhood approach

The nationally consistent early childhood approach is for children younger than 7 with developmental delay or disability. Children who do not fully meet the definition of developmental delay and have developmental concerns will also be supported through the early childhood approach.

The NDIA worked with a range of leading Australian early childhood intervention practitioners and researchers to design the early childhood approach. The approach has been designed to identify the type and level of support a child needs to achieve their best outcome. A child's early years are very important as they set up how they will learn and develop later in life. The approach supports best practice in **early childhood intervention** because it helps the child and family build their capacity and supports greater inclusion in community and everyday settings.

This means each child will be provided with opportunities to grow and learn. The aim of early intervention is to reduce the impact of a person's disability or developmental delay on their daily life by providing support as early as possible.

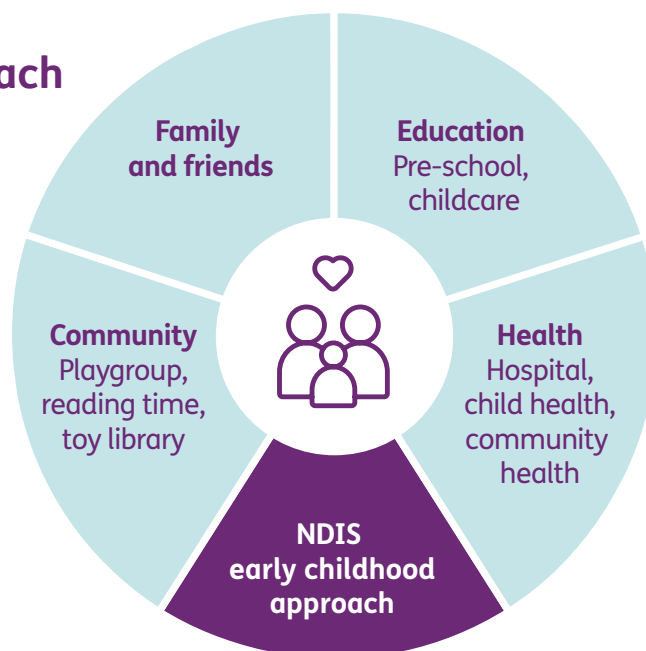
If your child's development improves they may no longer need support from the NDIS.

The family-centred, early childhood approach is delivered by the NDIS early childhood partner in your local community.

Does my child need a diagnosis to get NDIS support?

A diagnosis is not required for children younger than 7. This is because diagnosis for children can be complex and often requires time for observation and greater understanding of the impact the disability or developmental delay can have on the child's growth and development.

The early childhood approach



NDIS key words:

Early childhood intervention

Early childhood intervention is support provided as early as possible to reduce the impacts of disability or developmental delay, and to build a child's skills and independence.

Early childhood partners

When you seek NDIS support, your child will be connected with an early childhood partner appointed by the NDIA to deliver the early childhood approach. An early childhood partner will work with you to understand the needs of your child and your family, and help you connect to the right supports. This is called early connections. You can find your local early childhood partner at [ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au).

How will the early childhood partner work with us?

Your early childhood partner can meet you and your child at your home, office, a community location or at the early childhood partner's office. It's your choice.

First, they will listen to your main concerns and the reasons you are seeking support.

Main concerns

Tell us your main concerns and the reasons you are seeking support.

For example, sleep, toileting, behaviour, school transition, etc.

You can get **early connections** through your early childhood partner. This may include any combination of connections to:

- community and other **mainstream services**
- practical information that's relevant to your child's development
- connections to other families
- **early supports**
- help applying for the NDIS if your child is eligible.

Your early childhood partner will work with you to understand what is going well and where your child may need further help. They will collect this information by:

- using the PEDI-CAT—a questionnaire you will be asked to complete about your child's development
- observing your child playing, moving around and interacting with others
- talking to you about your family routines, the things your child enjoys and the things your family does together
- other **assessment tools**, if required.



NDIS key word:

Early connections

Early connections can help you support your child's development regardless of whether they're eligible for the NDIS. Early connections make sure you get the right supports and services to help your child's individual needs.

Mainstream services

Mainstream services are the government systems providing services to the Australian public, for example health, education or child protection.

Early supports

Early supports are designed to build your capacity to support your child's development and promote everyday learning in your home and other community environments.

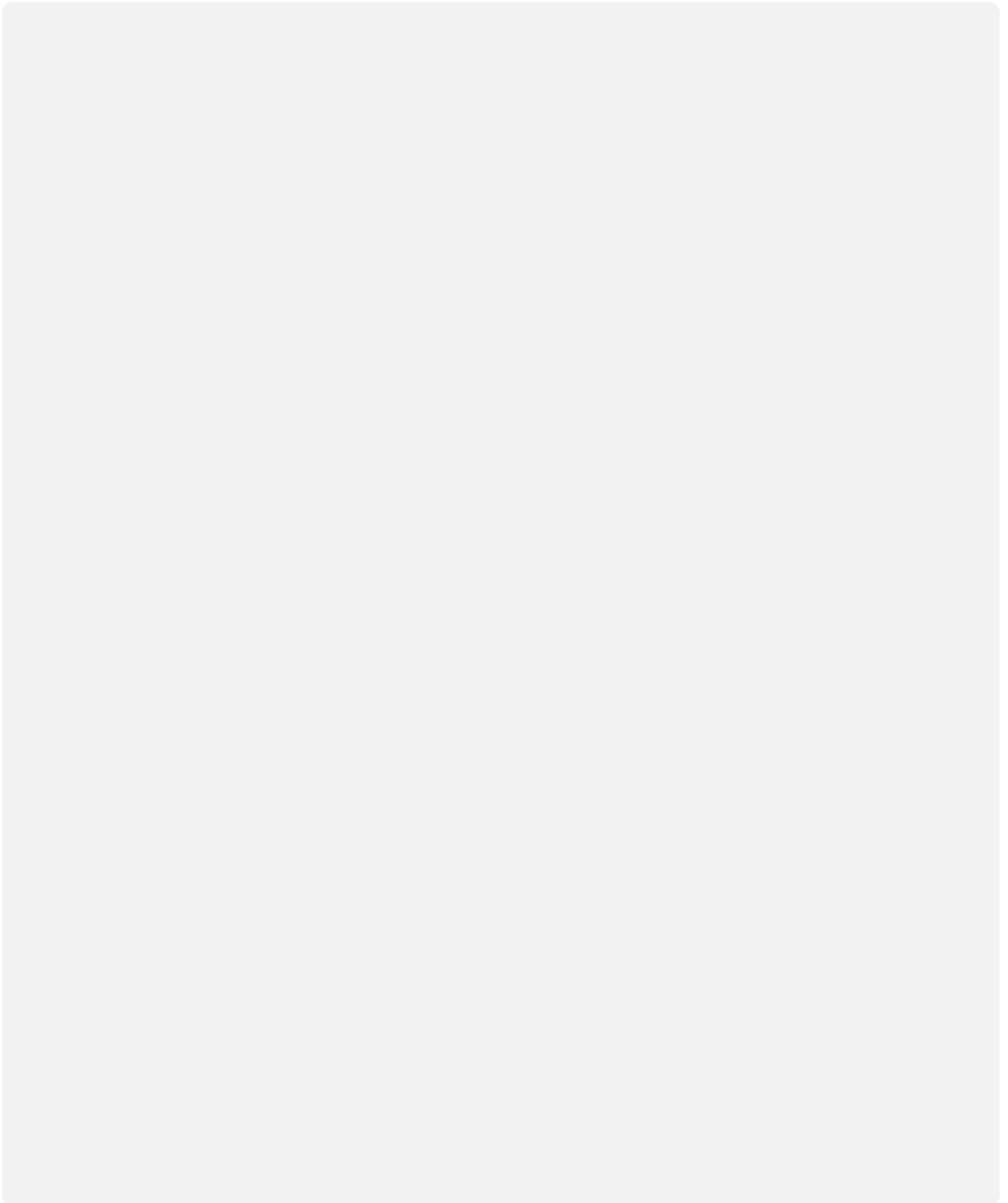
An early childhood partner may recommend early supports if your child is younger than 6 and has developmental concerns.

Assessment tools

Assessment tools are resources that guide our understanding of how a child is functioning.

People in my child's life

It is helpful for your early childhood partner to get a picture of the people and services in your child's life. A diagram or list may help your early childhood partner understand who the people are and how they fit together. It is handy to keep a copy with you and share it with other people who support you.



Setting goals for your child



Goals are things you want your child to pursue with support from the NDIS and other supports and services. These goals might include things like interacting with other children or getting dressed by themselves.

Your goals may focus on:

- the things you would like your child to be able to do
- the interactions you would like them to have
- the activities you would like them to be involved in.

Questions about your child's goals:

What does my child do now? What does my child like to do?

What supports are already in place? Are they working well?

What activities does my child need help with?

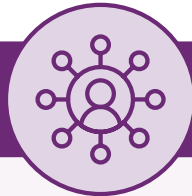
What are the priorities for my child?

Getting supports and services for your child

Your early childhood partner will help you find and connect to the services and supports you need for your child. Supports for your child are designed to help them pursue their goals. Any of the early intervention supports offered should work with your other informal, community and mainstream services to build your child's opportunities for inclusion and participation in everyday life.

Your early childhood partner will also provide information about the different support opportunities and services available. These include connections to mainstream and community services:

Community supports



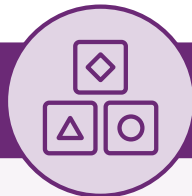
- Local playgroups
- Library activities
- Community groups
- Sporting, drama, music and dance activities
- Parenting programs
- Parent support groups
- Family support services
- Parent counselling services
- Specialist disability support services

Health services



- Doctors
- Paediatricians
- Community health nurse/
child health nurses
- Community health allied health services
- Vision and hearing assessment services
- Dietitians
- Dental services

Early childhood education and care services



- School, preschool and kindergarten centres
- Childcare centres
- Family day care
- Long day care
- Occasional care

Education services



- State-funded primary schools
- Independent schools
- Special education options in some areas

Connections to information



Depending on your child's individual support needs, your early childhood partner can give you practical information that's relevant to your situation. This may include practical advice on typical child development topics, and helpful strategies you can include in your child's daily routine.

Connections to other families



Early childhood partners will connect you to local support networks and services so you can meet other people with similar experiences or situations. These parent-to-parent and community based support systems can build your knowledge through shared experiences and help you navigate the road ahead. They can give you the opportunity to talk about your family's experiences, and celebrate your child's uniqueness. It's a good way to build community with other families.

Some of the supports offered by early childhood partners may be in group situations such as information sessions and parent workshops.

Connections to early supports



Your early childhood partner may provide some early supports to help your child make progress towards achieving their goals. These supports can be given in your home, community spaces or early childhood education setting, to ensure you and your child feel comfortable and get the most benefit from the support.

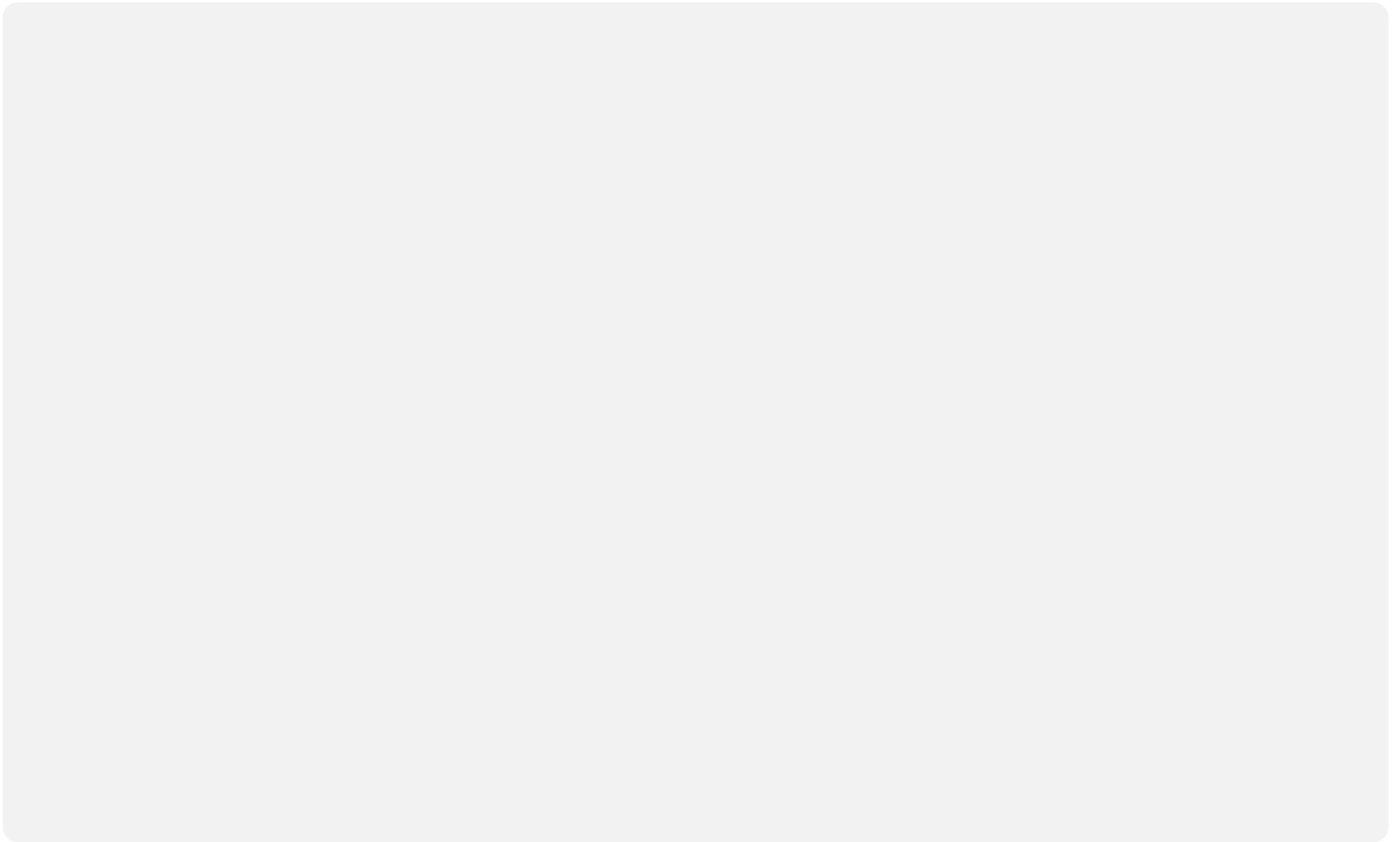
Help to apply to the NDIS



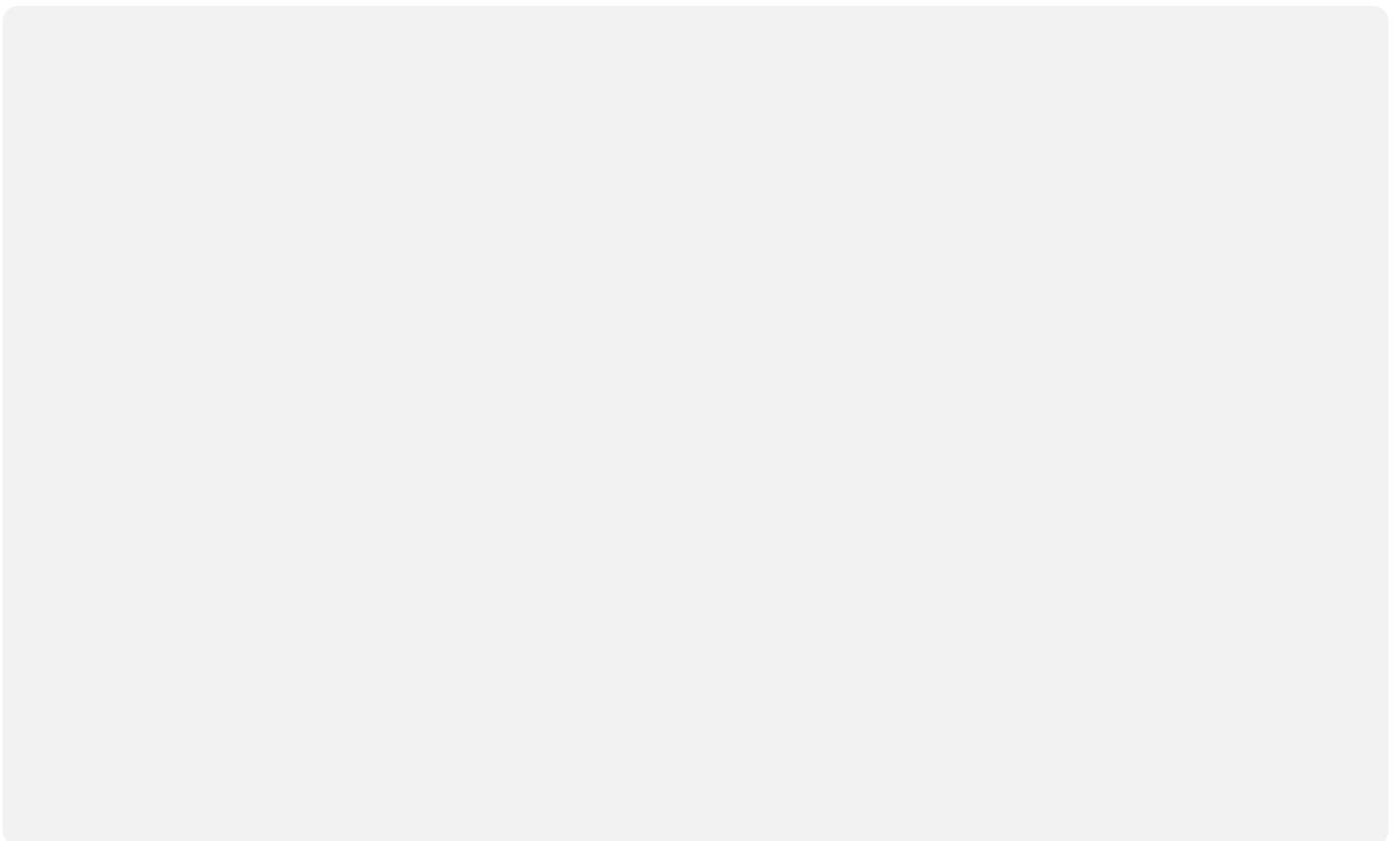
Your early childhood partner can support you to put together information and evidence to work out if your child is eligible to apply for the NDIS. If your child transitions from early connections to become an NDIS participant, then your early childhood partner will develop your child's NDIS plan with you.

We have agreed on the following next steps

Early childhood partner will follow up:



Family will follow up:



Helpful websites

The following websites can provide you with further information on early childhood intervention:

NDIS

Visit ndis.gov.au for more information about the NDIS early childhood approach and early childhood partners.

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA)

The national peak body representing children and young people (aged 0-25) with disability and their families. Visit cyda.org.au for more information.

Early Childhood Australia (ECA)

Act in the interests of young children, their families and those in the early childhood education and care field. Visit earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au for more information.

Reimagine Australia

Promotes the interests of young children with developmental delay/disability and their families. Visit reimagine.com.au for more information.

Raising Children Network

Offers up-to-date, research-based information on a wide range of topics, including child development, behaviour, health, nutrition, play and learning, sleep and safety. Visit raisingchildren.net.au for more information.

Association for Children with a Disability

Run by parents, they provide information, support and advocacy for families who have a child or young adult under the age of 18. Visit acd.org.au for more information.

Carers Australia

Provides information about unpaid care and support to family members and friends of people who have a disability, mental illness, chronic condition, terminal illness, an alcohol/drug issue, or who are frail and aged. Visit carersaustralia.com.au for more information.

ECIA VIC/TAS

The peak body for early childhood intervention in Victoria and Tasmania. Visit eciavic.org.au for more information.

Your early childhood partner's contact details

Early childhood partner organisation:

Phone number:

Name of early childhood partner:

Email address:

ndis

For more information about the NDIS please contact:

National Disability Insurance Agency


 Telephone 1800 800 110

 Find us on Facebook/NDISAus

 Follow us on Twitter @NDIS

ndis.gov.au

For people who need help with English

 TIS: 131 450

For people who are deaf or hard of hearing

 TTY: 1800 555 677

 Speak and Listen: 1800 555 727