

How a support worker can help



NDIS-funded support workers assist families to care for children with disability. With careful planning, support workers can become an important part of your child's team. They can help support your child's development and give you the opportunity to take short breaks or respite.

Planning is important

Start by thinking about what children of the same age as your child can usually do independently, or with limited help.

Consider how a support worker can help your child to have similar experiences as other children, how they can encourage the development of independence, and reduce their reliance on you as parents.

It's important to think about your child's age, interests and goals when planning how a support worker can assist. As your children get older, you can ask them about what they would like to do with their support worker.

When planning activities, think about things that are free and local. Get ideas from your child's therapists and from other families.

Activities at home

- Assist with personal care tasks like toileting, eating, showering, and getting dressed
- Help your child with basic household tasks that they do for pocket money
- Support your child in getting ready for school
- Have fun cooking or baking
- Sensory play, making obstacle courses, playdough or sensory trays together
- Facilitate play with siblings or friends
- Practice online gaming with your child, to build their skills to play independently
- Practice other games like dress-ups, chasey, board games or footy card trading, to build your child's skills to do these with other children
- Help your child with reading practice, homework or tasks set by therapists
- Read books or watch movies together

Activities out and about

- Explore all the local playgrounds and find some new favourites
- Go swimming, to the skate park, local library or shops, or take a bike ride
- Facilitate social interactions with friends
- Support your child to participate in local sport and recreation activities, such as Auskick, Scouts or activities at the library
- Practice using public transport
- Join you on family outings

Working together

Getting to know and trust a support worker takes time. You might want to start with activities in your home or only for a short period, so you get to see how they interact with your child.

Make a plan with the support worker at the start of each session. This can then become the regular routine and helps your child and their support worker to know what to expect.

Ensure the support worker can effectively use your child's communication method.

Think about how they will safely transport your child to activities outside of the home.

Set and communicate boundaries on any social media or phone contact between your older child and their support worker.

Support workers need to remain flexible and be prepared to adapt activities based on factors such as your child's attention span, sensory needs, toileting requirements, access needs or energy levels.

Check in regularly with your support worker to get feedback and insights from them and your child. Effective communication is essential to ensure that activities are enjoyable and match your child's interests.

Useful links

Making a training video for support workers

<https://www.summerfoundation.org.au/resources/making-a-training-video-for-support-workers/>

Disability worker Training and Development Catalogue

<https://www.vdwc.vic.gov.au/about/news-resources-media/news/disability-worker-training-and-development-catalogue-now-available>

Related topics

Finding the right Support Workers for your child and family

<https://www.acd.org.au/finding-the-right-support-workers-for-your-child-and-family/>

Writing a Carer Statement

<https://www.acd.org.au/writing-a-carer-statement/>