

Go To Guide

Autism and your teen 13–18 years





This booklet was developed by
South West Autism Network (SWAN)

We are grateful for the input from autistic individuals and their families who shared their expertise to make this a useful and practical resource for families of adolescents.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to its development.



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Communities**



Australian Government
Department of **Social Services**

This project is an NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) initiative, jointly funded by Department of Communities (Disability Services) and Department of Social Services (DSS). For more ILC information and resources please visit:

- Department of Communities (Disability Services):
swanautism.org.au/dss-ilc-resources
- Department of Social Services:
swanautism.org.au/dss-ilc-program

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About SWAN

The South West Autism Network (SWAN) supports autistic people and their families in the south west region of Western Australia.

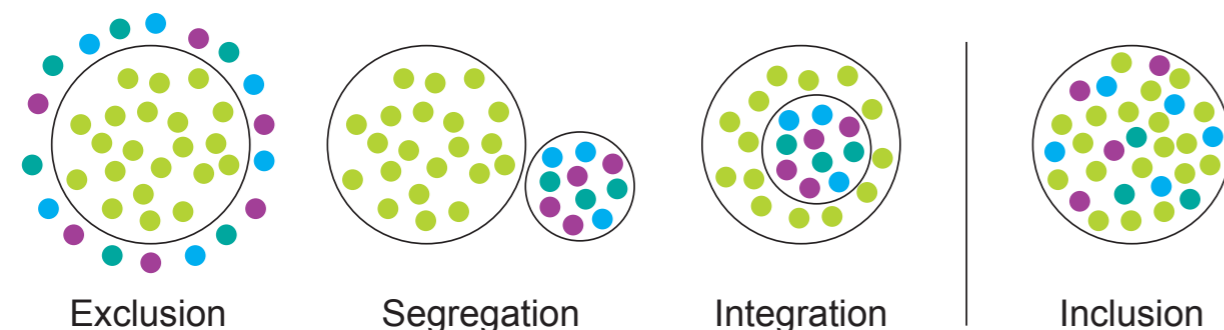
We provide:

- information, resources, and peer support (online, phone or face-to-face)
- social media groups
- accessible information via website and e-newsletter
- a free resource library for members
- training and workshop opportunities
- fun skill-building group programs for children and young adults
- social events such as our Family Christmas Party

SWAN's staff and Board of management includes autistic adults and family members. This gives us an understanding of the experiences of people with autism and guides us in providing the information, services and support people need.

Our vision is to empower autistic people and people with disability in south west WA and beyond. We are a Disabled Persons and Families Organisation (DPFO) and use person-centred language. Most autistic adults prefer to be described as an 'autistic person' rather than 'person with autism', and SWAN uses the language preferred by autistic people.

At SWAN, we believe in inclusion as the truly fair way to honour and respect the rights of all people.



SWAN is a not-for-profit organisation with tax-deductible status. Our services are funded through government grants and the generosity of people who make donations and provide ongoing sponsorship.

Go to our website to learn more about SWAN, join as a member or find out how you can get involved. www.swanautism.org.au

“High quality inclusion is not just about ‘being there’ or attending a mainstream or universal setting, but about creating environments that provide opportunities for ALL children to actively engage in ALL activities”

Denise Luscombe, Chair ECIA WA/NT 2015

Parents who receive good information and support are better equipped and more confident in their role. Young people with disability need the same chances as everyone else to think about what they want to do and make decisions about their life. This leads to increased decision-making skills and greater independence and responsibility.

About this booklet

The years covered by this booklet include many changes in a young person's life. From starting high school through to getting ready for adult life. Its focus is on autistic teenagers having the opportunities and the support they need to be included in all aspects of their community. The booklet aims to help you be better equipped and more confident in supporting your autistic teen to navigate the teenage years.

While there is information on high school education, we have also included other information to help teens and their families find the services, community activities and supports they need. We've also included information about rights, advocacy services, support for parents and where to find more information and help when you need it. There is information about the NDIS and advice to help you with planning to get individualised appropriate supports for this age group, as well as financial entitlements and other supports you might need.

Because some teens may not yet have a formal diagnosis, the booklet begins with information and guidance on the diagnostic process for this age group, as well as how to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The rest is useful for parents whether or not their son or daughter already has a diagnosis.

This booklet is the third of a series that SWAN has produced for different ages and stages of life. You can find all the booklets on the SWAN website (www.swanautism.org.au) or contact us if you'd like a hard copy.

How to use this booklet

Parents using this resource will be at different stages and some will be looking for specific information. Some will want to read the whole booklet first, while others will want to look first at certain topics that are of more interest at the moment. It's up to you.

As well as providing information, we have also included some blank templates and a Notes page. You can use these to map out and record important information about services and supports, so it becomes a handy personal resource.

If you have any comments about the booklet, or need further information, please get in touch with us at SWAN by emailing info@swanautism.org.au.



Getting a diagnosis in Western Australia



For teens aged between 13-17 years, autism diagnostic assessments are typically conducted by:

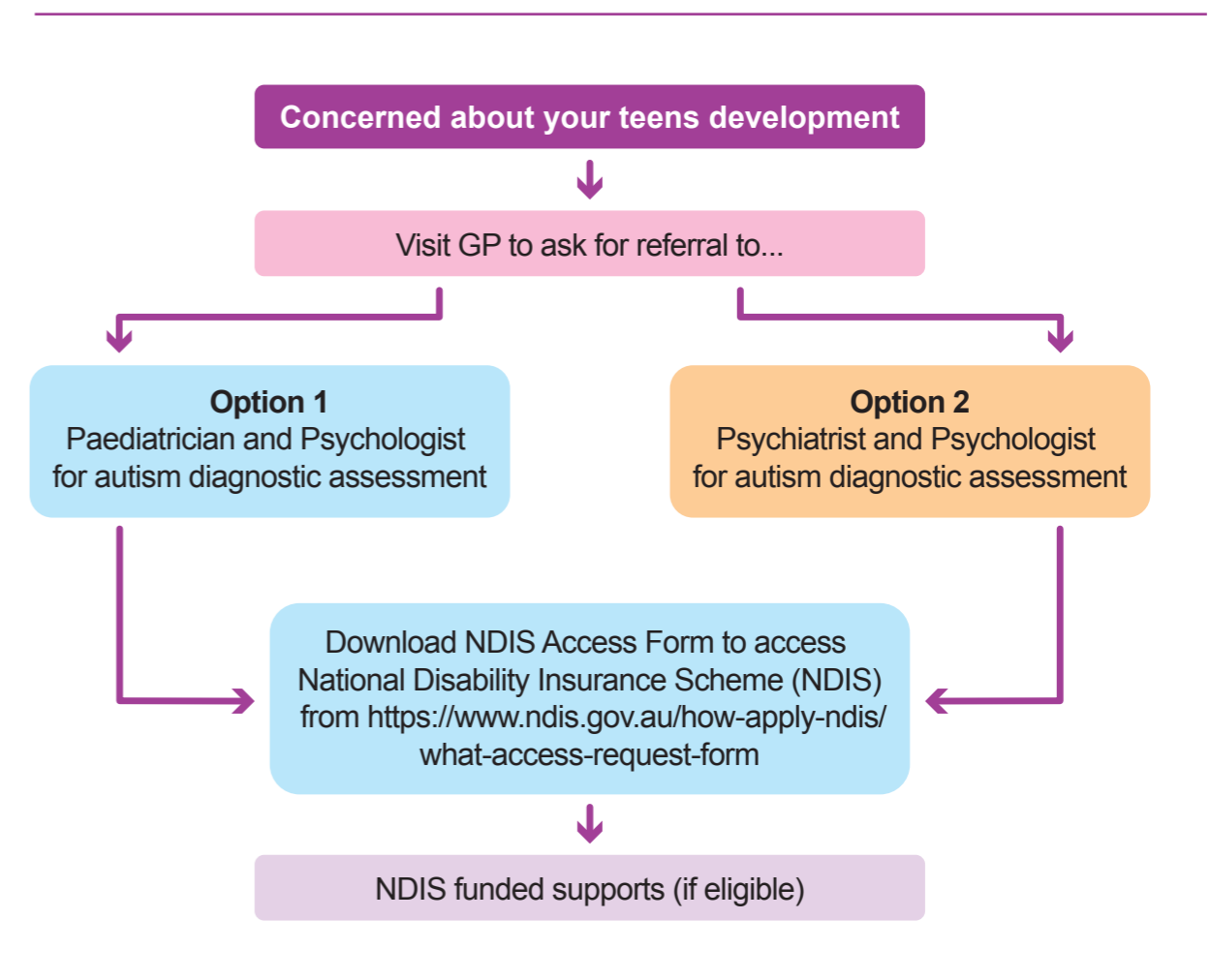
- Paediatrician and Psychologist, or
- Psychiatrist and Psychologist

Sometimes the diagnostic assessment can be performed by either a clinical psychologist or a psychiatrist alone, depending on the evidence of autism in early childhood and the type of diagnostic report they produce. Please note, not all qualified professionals carry out autism diagnostic assessments.

The process for diagnosing autism varies between different Australian states and territories. If a person was diagnosed outside WA, they may need to be re-assessed to meet the criteria for support in the WA Education system. Children aged 7 and over generally need a formal diagnosis to be eligible to receive NDIS supports and support in schools.

Here's how it works

If you are worried about your teenager's development, here are the different options and steps involved in getting a diagnosis for a child aged 13 years and over.





The autism diagnostic process for teenagers in WA starts with an appointment with your GP to discuss your concerns and ask for a referral to the appropriate professional. Your child needs to go to the GP appointment with you. Your GP may recommend a particular paediatrician or psychiatrist, but you can ask to be referred to the specialists of your choice. If you don't hear from the specialists within two weeks of them being sent the referral, it's a good idea to contact them directly.

The paediatrician or psychiatrist will carry out a diagnostic assessment of your child. If they believe your child needs further assessment for autism, they will refer your son or daughter to a psychologist for a formal autism diagnostic assessment. These assessments can be done either through the public or private systems. Alternatively, you can choose to go to a psychologist first, but would not be eligible for Medicare rebate if going through the private system.

- **Public:** Public diagnostic assessments are free, but for youth aged 13yrs to 17yrs, the waiting period is up to 2 years. Public autism diagnostic assessments are carried out by the Department of Communities – Disability Services OR the State Child Development Centre (Perth families only).
- **Private:** The waiting period for a private autism diagnostic assessment is usually around 1 to 4 months, and you will need to pay a fee for the assessments. You may be able to claim some small rebates from Medicare or private health insurance. Please contact the relevant specialists before the appointments to find out about their fees and any rebates.

Autism is diagnosed using the DSM-V-TR, and people are diagnosed based on having difficulties in two areas:

- a) Social communication
- b) Restricted, repetitive behaviour or interests

The diagnostic report should also include a level of severity for both areas.

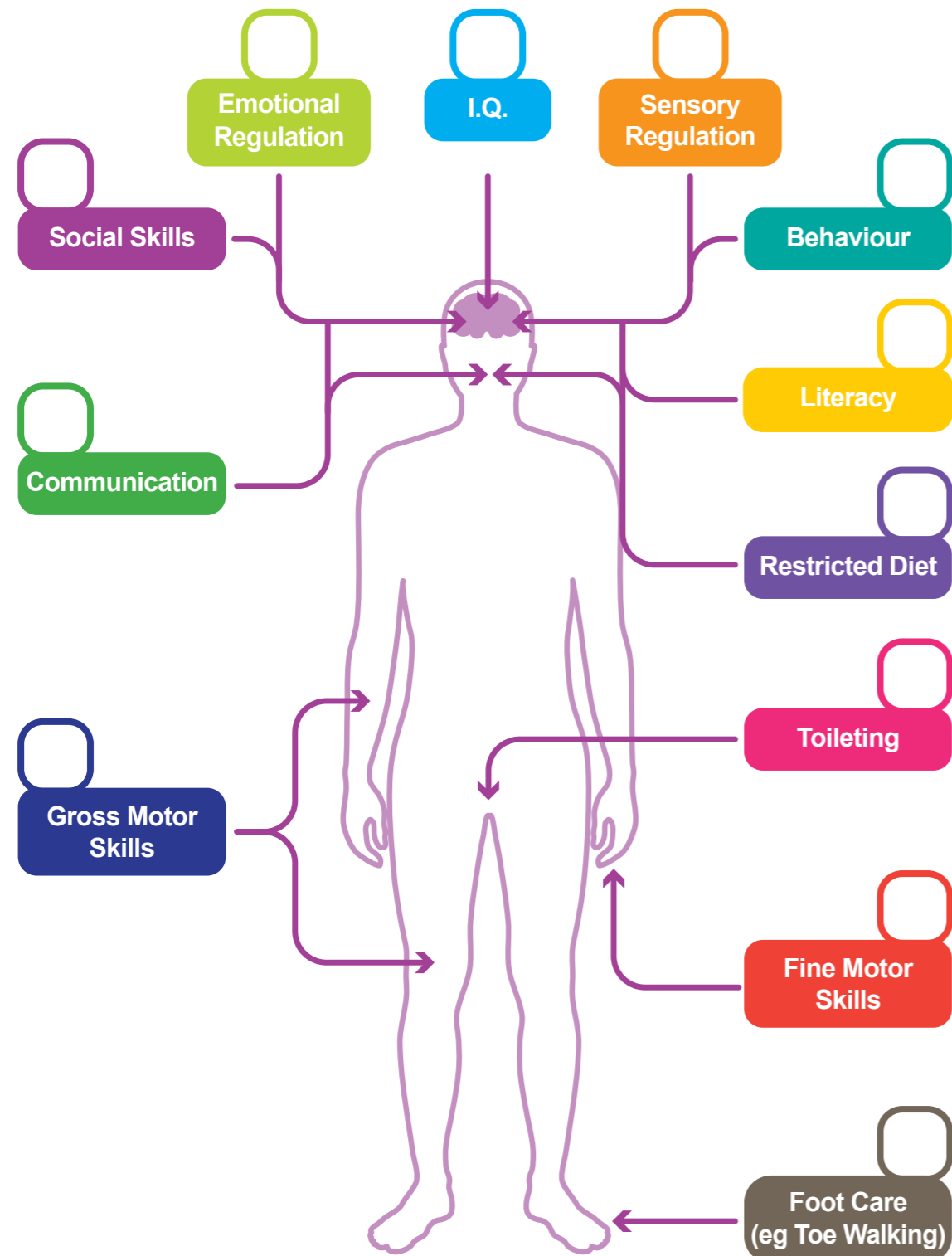
The levels are:

- Level 1 – The individual needs support.
- Level 2 – The individual needs substantial support.
- Level 3 – The individual needs very substantial support.

Currently, a diagnosis of autism level 2 or 3 is automatically eligible for NDIS. A diagnosis of autism level 1 may also be eligible for NDIS, but you would need to submit supporting evidence of the impact a person's autism has on their ability to function.



What Does Your Teen Need Support With?



You can use this diagram to think about what your teen may need support with. This will be useful when you have your meeting with APM (see page 23 for more information about APM).



Handy Hint – Collecting evidence and information

You will probably be asked similar questions by GPs, paediatricians and other specialists, therapists and other services about your teen. You will also receive lots of forms, reports and paperwork. The best way to keep track of it all is to:

HELPFUL TIPS



- Create a file where you can store everything in one place. Take print copies with you to appointments with your paediatrician, other specialists, therapists and APM.
- Write down your concerns about your child. You can also use video to show the diagnostician or therapist your concerns.* *Remember to keep any notes and videos private – your child will be an adult one day, and the internet is forever.
- Collect supporting evidence of your child's needs from a variety of sources. e.g., letters or reports from day care, school, therapists, family members etc.
- Store digital backups of important reports and paperwork in the cloud. Dropbox, Google Docs and OneDrive are some options.
- Never assume the health professional you are meeting has all your information. Take print copies with you, just in case.



Support Services

One of the most valuable sources of support for parents is other parents who are going through similar experiences. Not only for emotional support but for the sharing of everyday useful information, recommendations, and ideas. Many parents find the connections they make through support groups become enduring friendships as their children grow.

SWAN

As a member of SWAN, you can join our closed Facebook Peer Support Group to connect with other parents and autistic adults, as well as follow our public Facebook page for news and information. You can also contact us for information, referral, and support, including about NDIS. We have a directory of support services on our website, but you can also contact us for help to find what you need.

- Website: www.swanautism.org.au
- Email: info@swanautism.org.au
- Phone or SMS: 0499 819 038 or 0476 315 694

Carer Gateway

As the parent of a school age child, you may not think of yourself as a 'carer', but you can still tap into a range of services and opportunities offered on the Carer Gateway. These include professional counselling (online, phone or in person), online skills courses and self-guided coaching.

You can find more information about the Carer Gateway here:

swanautism.org.au/carer-gateway

Carers WA is the contact and provider for the Carer Gateway in WA:

swanautism.org.au/carer-gateway-WA

Family Support

Family and friends

Some parents find their extended family and friends to be great supports. If there are people you would like to contact sometimes for practical help or emotional support, check that they are happy for you to do this. Keep their contact details handy for when you need them.

Advocacy Support

Sometimes, if you are having problems with the NDIS or with other services such as education or health, you might feel you need someone who can give you good advice and practical help.

You may get some help from family, friends, and your peer support networks, but sometimes you might want more formal help from an advocacy organisation. Advocacy organisations provide free advocacy support.



What can advocacy help me with?

If you have a problem, an advocate can give you advice to help you decide what to do. They may also provide practical support such as someone to go to meetings with you to sort out problems and make sure your child's rights are respected.

Where can I get advocacy support?

SWAN is a free service and may be able to help you in some situations. We work with people with disability and their families to improve knowledge and understanding about the NDIS, mainstream, and disability services, and can attend meetings with you as an advocate if needed. It can be helpful to speak with a peer support organisation like SWAN before important meetings, to help you prepare. If you know more, and feel prepared, you will feel more confident in meetings to advocate for your child.

Here are some other organisations that offer advocacy support:

Advocacy WA

Advocacy WA is an organisation based in Bunbury, but they also have offices in other major towns and operate across the southwest of WA. It is a free service for people with disabilities, and parents can contact them on behalf of their child for advocacy support.

You can find out more about Advocacy WA and how to contact them here:

swanautism.org.au/advocacy-wa

Sussex Street Community Law Services

Sussex Street Community Law Services is a free legal service based in Perth for low-income and disadvantaged people in the community, including people with disabilities. The WA Disability Discrimination Unit is part of the Sussex Street Community Law Services. They provide information and advice to people living anywhere in WA (including the southwest) who feel they have been discriminated against because of their disability. You can find out more about

Sussex Street Community Law Services and how to contact them here:

swanautism.org.au/sussex-st-comm-law

Developmental Disability WA (DDWA)

DDWA provide free advocacy, and have expertise in advocacy across health, education, disability services (including NDIS), justice (including guardianship), access, recreation and housing.

You can find out more about DDWA, and contact them here:

- Website: swanautism.org.au/ddwa-ind-advocacy

As well as being able to get individual advocacy support, there are national and state advocacy organisations that advocate to the government on issues that are important to people with disabilities. Some also offer a range of information resources. There is a directory of Australian disability advocacy organisations here:

swanautism.org.au/afdo-advocacy

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA)

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) is the national representative organisation for children and young people with disabilities aged 0 to 25 years. CYDA has information on NDIS, inclusive education, and much more.

swanautism.org.au/cyda

People With disability WA (PWdWA)

PWdWA provides non-legal individual advocacy to help people with disabilities speak out, express their views, and uphold their rights.

swanautism.org.au/pwdwa

Advokit

Advokit is a simple, pop-up website produced by Disability Advocacy Network Australia (DANA) and Inclusion Australia during COVID 19. It is designed to help you with the advocacy resources you need during the pandemic and beyond.

swanautism.org.au/advokit



Financial Support

Centrelink Payments

Most parents of autistic children will be eligible for some financial assistance from Centrelink / Services Australia. However, you don't get any allowances or payments automatically when your child has a diagnosis, you have to apply for them.

The rules and application forms may change from time to time, so it's important to look at the current information and use current application forms. The payment starts from the date Centrelink receives your application, not the date your child is diagnosed, so it's a good idea to apply as soon as possible.

*Please note that when your child turns 16, Centrelink considers them to be an adult. See the information below for 16 years and over for details.

Here are some payments you may be entitled to:

Carer Allowance

Most parents of children diagnosed with autism will qualify for Carer Allowance from Centrelink. This is a fortnightly supplement to help with costs related to the disability. The allowance includes a Health Care Card in your child's name, which entitles them to low-cost prescription medications. The allowance is income-tested but the cut-off rate for the combined family income is \$250,000. Check the Centrelink website for current information:

swanautism.org.au/sa-carer-allowance

Carer Payment

Carer Payment is a means-tested fortnightly payment sometimes known as the Carer Pension. This is a payment for people who can't support themselves because they provide constant care to someone who has a disability, illness or is frail and aged.

Carer Supplement

This is a once-a-year payment automatically paid to people who receive Carer Allowance or Carer Payment.

Child Disability Assistance Payment

This a once a year payment automatically paid to people who receive Carer Allowance for a child under 16 years.



To Do Checklist

Services Australia (Centrelink)

Check eligibility for:

- Carer Allowance
- Carer Payment
- Carer Supplement
- Child Disability Assistance Payment

You can find more information here:
swanautism.org.au/sa-carer-payment





16 years and over

When your child with a disability turns 16 years of age, Centrelink treats them as an adult. Carer's Allowance (Under 16 years) payments, and the linked Health Care Card in your son or daughter's name stops.

There are a number of Centrelink payments and other government entitlements that your child and you as a carer may be eligible for when your child turns 16. While payments won't apply until your son or daughter's 16th birthday, it's a good idea to start the application process earlier as the process can take some time.

Where to start?

BEFORE your child turns 16, start by ensuring that your child has the following:

- Bank account in his or her own name (with linked debit card)
- Tax File Number
- Birth Certificate

If you obtain a bank account and TFN before your child's 16th Birthday, you won't need as many identifying documents. A bank debit card in your child's name also contributes toward 100pts of ID.

After their 16th Birthday, your child will need to have 100 points of ID in order to apply for a Tax File Number (TFN), bank account, AND for any eligible Centrelink payments.

You can apply for a WA Photo ID Card from the Department of Transport after their 16th Birthday. In the application for the Photo ID, it is possible to apply for two cards, one listing home address, and one without. The Photo ID Card can be used in place of a driver's licence.

Please note that it is preferable to have a bank account in your child's name. If needed, the bank can authorise a parent/guardian to have authority to operate the bank account. Some banks will also link children's bank accounts to parent bank accounts for easy access through internet and phone banking. Payments into a bank account in the name of the person with disability means that they will continue to be able to access their payments if their parent / carer passes away; and may reduce the risk (or perceived risk) of financial abuse.

You can take as long as you need to complete the required Centrelink application forms. If the documents are submitted after the two weeks allocated by Centrelink, payments will be back-dated to the date you submitted the forms. It is important to make sure that all forms are completed accurately, so take your time doing this, rather than rushing to submit all paperwork within the two weeks.

What financial assistance could my child be eligible for?

Here are some of the different kinds of financial assistance your child (and you) may be entitled to, and some tips to help you apply for them.

Disability Support Pension

The Disability Support Pension (DSP) provides financial assistance to people over the age of 16yrs who have a physical, intellectual or psycho-social disability (or are permanently blind) that prevents them from working more than 15 hours per week, or be re-trained for work. You need a medical report from your teenagers doctor to apply. The medical report form is part of the Disability Support Pension application package you will get from Centrelink. You will need to book a long appointment with your son or daughter's GP to complete the medical report, and your son or daughter will need to attend the appointment. Your son or daughter may also need to undergo a Job Capacity Assessment with Centrelink. People who receive the DSP are automatically eligible for a Health Care Card. Their Pension card also serves as their Health Care Card.

*Please note: Because autistic individuals are all different, not all individuals with an autism diagnosis are eligible for the Disability Support Pension.

Authority to enquire or act on your child's behalf

Centrelink can be a complicated system to understand and interact with, so most parents arrange authorisation to interact with them on their teenagers behalf. You will need to complete the SS313 form: 'Authorising a person or organisation to enquire or act on your behalf' to give permission for one person (eg. parent, sibling, carer, advocate) to interact with Centrelink on behalf of your son or daughter. They can still interact with Centrelink themselves if they wish.

You can go to a Centrelink office with your son or daughter to submit all the application forms including the SS313, and Centrelink staff will witness your son or daughter signing this form. Please explain to your son or daughter what this form is about before they sign. If your son or daughter is unable to sign this form, please advise Centrelink.

Pensioner Education Supplement

If your son or daughter is eligible for the Disability Support Pension, they may also be eligible for the Pensioner Education Supplement. To be eligible, the applicant must be:

- studying a secondary (high school) or tertiary (University, TAFE, or eligible private training organisation) course
- already receiving a pension or eligible payment
- studying full time in an approved course, undertaking approved activities or in some circumstances, part time

Carer Allowance (Over 16yrs)

If you currently receive Carer Allowance (Child Under 16yrs) or partial-allowance if you provide part time care, you may be eligible to receive Carer Allowance (Over 16yrs). You will need a medical report from your child's doctor to apply. The medical report form is part of the Carer Allowance application package available from Centrelink. You will need to book a long appointment with your son or daughter's GP to complete the medical report, and your son or daughter will need to attend the appointment.

Carer Payment

Carer Payment is an income support payment for people who personally provide constant care in the home of someone with a severe disability, illness, or who is frail aged. If you are deemed eligible to receive Carer Payment, you will automatically receive Carer Allowance. You use the same forms as for Carer Allowance.

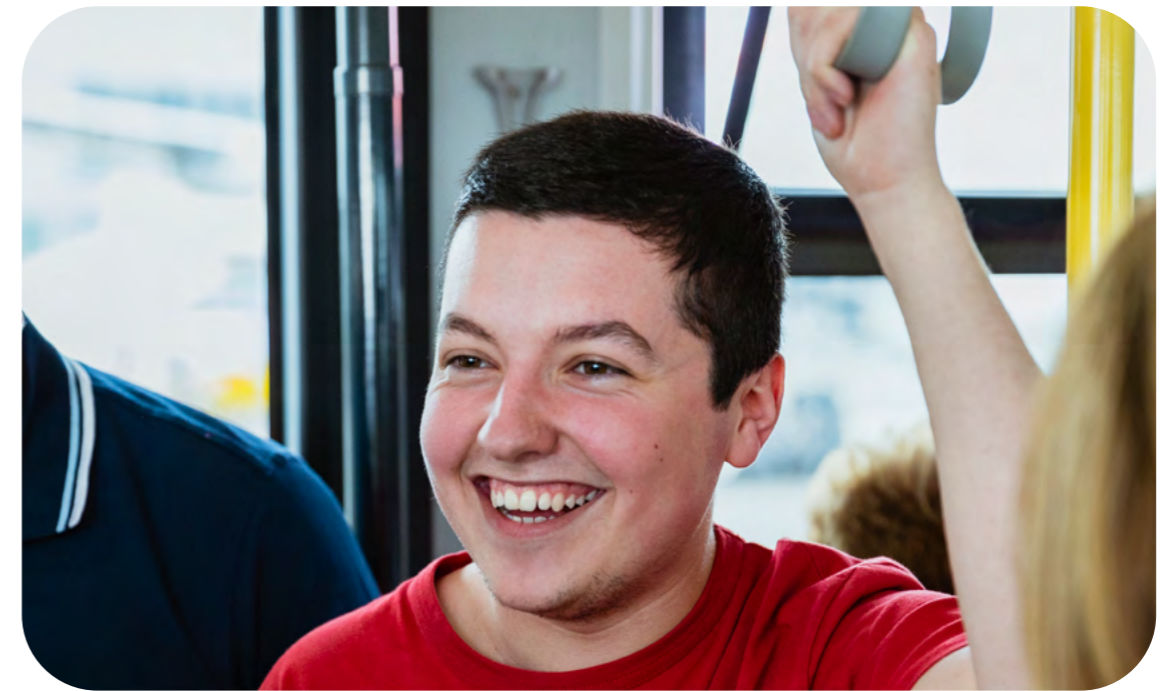
Ex-Carer Allowance (Child) Health Care Card

If you are eligible for Carer Allowance (Over 16yrs), your child will not automatically be allocated a Health Care Card in their name. If you already have a Health Care Card for your entire family, or your child is eligible for the Disability Support Pension, you will not need to apply for the Ex-Carer Allowance (Child) Health Care Card. *Please note: Your child may still be eligible for this even if you have been deemed ineligible for Carer Allowance (Over 16yrs) by Centrelink.

Mobility Allowance

Mobility Allowance is a Centrelink payment for people with disability, illness or injury who cannot use public transport without substantial assistance and who participate in approved activities. To qualify for Mobility Allowance, a person must be:

- aged 16 years or older,
- unable to use public transport without substantial assistance because of a disability, illness, or injury,
- travelling to and from home for paid work, voluntary work, study or training, or to look for work.



If your son or daughter has an NDIS plan, they will not get Mobility Allowance as travel assistance funded is covered by NDIS.

Country Age Pension Fuel Card (Western Australian Government Scheme)

If your son or daughter is eligible for the Disability Support Pension, or you receive Carer Payment or other eligible pension and live in regional Western Australia, the person who receives the pension or payment is eligible to receive the Country Age Pension Fuel Card. You can get the application form from your local Australia Post office, and you can submit the completed form direct at your local Australia Post Office. You will need to show Australia Post staff the Pensioner Concession Card as proof of eligibility. The fuel card will automatically be reissued annually as long as the person remains eligible. The fuel card assists with transport costs, and can be used with taxis and petrol stations registered with the Country Age Pension Fuel Card Scheme.

Continence Aids Payment

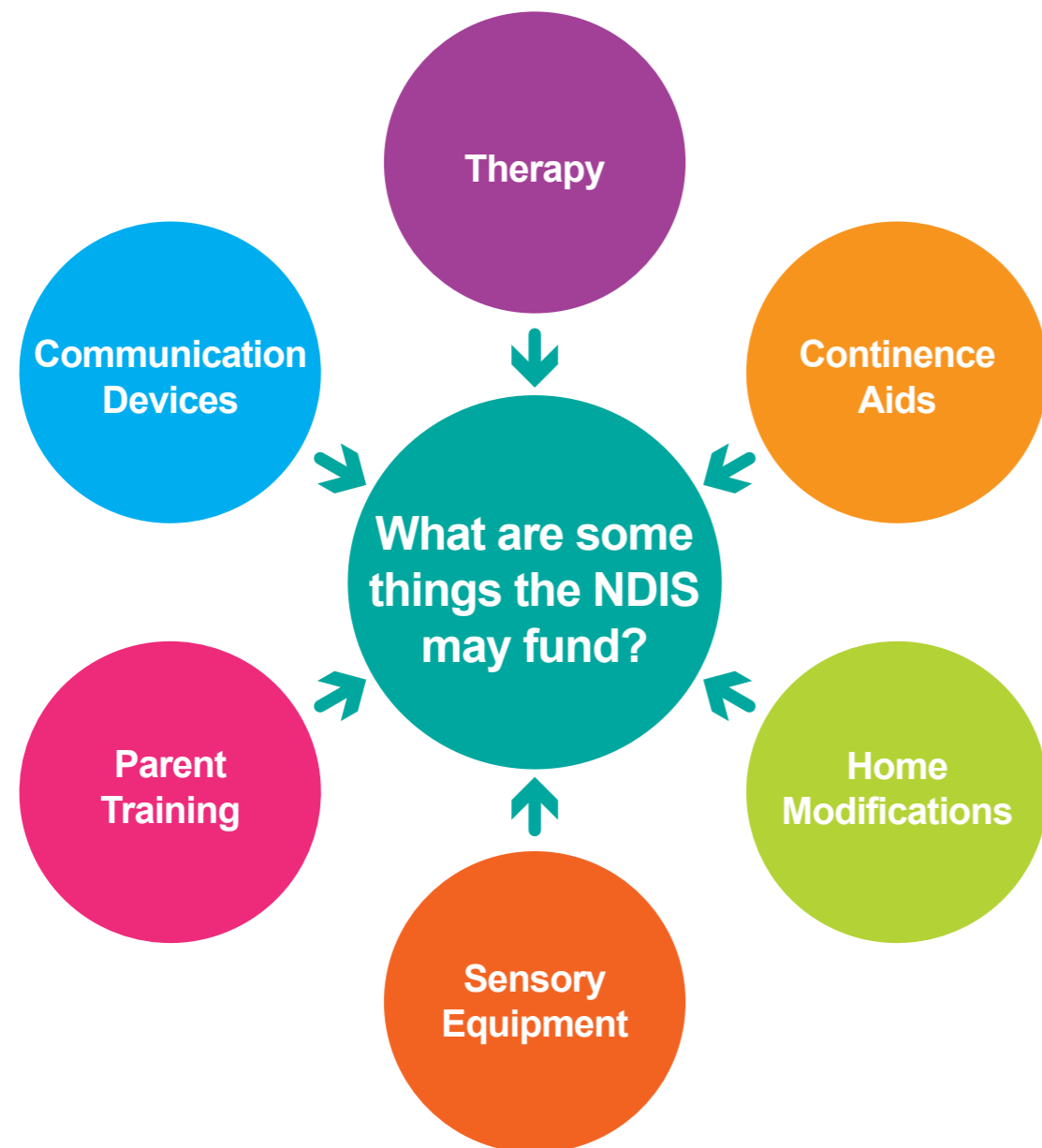
This payment helps you meet some of the costs associated with continence and continence related products if you have permanent and severe incontinence and are 5 years of age or older. If you have an NDIS plan, you can get continence aids funding in your plan instead of this payment.

Companion Card

This is a card for people with a significant and permanent disability, who need support to participate at community venues and activities. When going to venues that accept the Companion Card, the person supporting the person with disability is able to enter for free. The cardholder (person with disability) still pays an entry fee.

You can find out about eligibility and how to apply here:

swanautism.org.au/wa-companion-card



Supporting your child's development

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is the national scheme that funds reasonable and necessary supports to help people with disabilities live the life they want. The NDIS is run by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). In regional Western Australia, NDIA offices are usually co-located at Centrelink.

Who is eligible for the NDIS?

If your child is aged 7 and over they must have a significant and permanent disability. They will need a diagnosis of autism or other eligible disability to access the NDIS.

To be eligible, you also need to be an Australian citizen, be a permanent resident, or other visa holder with a Protected Special Category Visa.

How do we access the NDIS?

Download and fill out an NDIS Access Request Form (ARF). If your child is diagnosed with autism level 2 or 3, you can submit a copy of your child's autism diagnostic reports with the ARF to NDIS instead of filling out section 2 of the form. If your child has been diagnosed with autism level 1, you will need to ask your GP, paediatrician, or allied health therapist to fill out section 2 of the form, and submit that to NDIS with the ARF and diagnostic report. You can download the forms here: swanautism.org.au/ndis-access-request-form. The form can be emailed to NAT@ndis.gov.au, or dropped off at your nearest NDIS office (usually co-located at Centrelink).

APM Communities

APM Communities is the NDIS Partners in the Community organisation in the south west of WA. They deliver NDIS Local Area Coordination (LAC) services to help people with disability, families and carers to understand the NDIS and identify and access the services and support they need. They work with NDIS participants to develop and use their NDIS plans. As well as disability services, APM can help with connection to community and mainstream services. Approximately 75% of NDIS participants aged 7yrs+ will work with an LAC to prepare and review their NDIS Plans. The other 25% will meet with NDIA Planners direct. The main role of the LAC partner is to draft your child's NDIS Plan and send it to the NDIA for approval.

To speak to someone about LAC Services, call 1300 276 522 (APM LAC) or email_lac@apm.net.au

There are APM offices in Bunbury, Busselton and Margaret River.

APM Communities

Shop 1 16 Victoria Street
Bunbury WA 6230
Ph: 1300 276 522
swanautism.org.au/apm-ndis

APM Communities

Shop 13 69 Prince Street
Busselton WA 6280
Ph: 1300 276 522
swanautism.org.au/apm-ndis

APM Communities

Tenancy 14
The Village at Margs
49 Town View Terrace
Margaret River WA 6285
Ph: 1300 276 522
swanautism.org.au/apm-ndis



What help can we get from NDIS?

Every person is different, so the NDIS works with each child and their family individually at a planning meeting with the APM LAC. The aim of the meeting is to identify needs and goals and work out a plan of supports. It is **VERY** important to prepare for this meeting, to make sure your child gets a plan and the funds to pay for support services.

There are some good resources to help you understand the NDIS and help you with this pre-planning. You can download the booklets here:

swanautism.org.au/ndis-participants

You can also contact SWAN to help you with the process of working out what your child needs, and what will work best for your family. We can meet with you face to face or via Zoom video-conferencing.

You can find some more pre-planning resources in the 'For Further Information' section of this booklet.

What is usually in an NDIS plan for a high school aged child?

When you are doing pre-planning for your meeting with the LAC, you and your teenager need to think about some goals. NDIS plans are usually for 12 months, and are then reviewed, so it's a good idea to think about some long term goals for the year and some shorter term goals that can be achieved during the year.

The teenage years generally mean less reliance on family and more connection with friends and other people in the community. The transition to adulthood during these years can be challenging for any young person, but can be harder to understand and deal with when you are autistic.

An NDIS plan for an autistic child during their high school years would still usually include goals relating to their development, such as speech/ occupational therapy and psychology support. But it's also important to think about this stage of life; the kinds of things you would expect to happen in any teenager's life, and the supports your child might need as they move through these years.



Here are a few areas to think about that might help you identify goals for your autistic teenager:

- Will they need help with managing all that is involved in being a high school student? This includes organisational skills, communicating with people at school, travel skills, moving around on the school campus, managing their money and problem-solving when things aren't going to plan.
- Do they need help to learn some skills?
- Do they need any equipment or materials to help with organisation or communication?
- Will your teenager need help to understand and manage the changes that are happening to their body and their sexual feelings, and do they understand what kind of behaviour is ok and not ok?
- Will they need help when it comes to understanding relationships, such as who is a friend and who is a boyfriend/girlfriend?
- Do they know how to keep themselves safe?
- Would some counselling or relationships education be a good idea, and do they need ongoing support to learn the skills they need?
- What kinds of supports will your young person need to develop their practical and social skills to become more independent of their family? Might this include help with identifying interests and opportunities in the community, and ongoing support or mentoring to develop and practise social and independence skills?
- Around year 10, high school students are being encouraged to think about what they would like to do when they leave school and get the chance to do some work experience. Will your child get enough help to think and talk about work experience possibilities and try out a few things?
- Will they need extra support to do vocational training and work experience?



The NDIS doesn't cover supports, resources and equipment that are the responsibility of the school and/or education department to provide. For example, the NDIS won't provide funds for Education Assistants, modifying curriculum or modifications to the school environment. But NDIS will fund some supports to help inclusion and participation, transition between schools and aids and equipment used both at home and at school.

The NDIS may also agree to a goal to help you increase your skills and capacity as a parent to support your child's development and inclusion, for example, learning to support their communication, or attending SWAN or other workshops to help with parenting your autistic teenager.

What goals could we include in the plan?

First of all, it's important to include your teenager in pre-planning. The way this happens will depend on each person, their communication skills, their interest in being involved, family relationships and more. To be successful, it needs to be a plan they feel comfortable with, so they need to be involved in whatever way possible. Plan ahead so there's no need to rush, and build the pre-planning around your child, in ways they can contribute and in ways that interest and that motivate them. A young person who enjoys drawing might like to draw pictures that relate to what they want to achieve. There are some good planning tools that are visual and that you can have conversations about to explore ideas and goals. For example, Autism Queensland have created the Adolescent/Adult Goal Setting Tool (AAGST) designed to enable autistic individuals and other neurodivergent individuals to engage in person-centred planning processes.

For More information on the AAGST, please visit:
swanautism.org.au/autism-qld-adult-goal-setting

Think about the skills your teenager needs at home, in school, to make friends, to take part in community activities and sports, and when they are preparing for life after school. Think about some long term goals (keeping them fairly broad), as well as some shorter term more specific goals that might be achieved during the year.

Examples of some broad goals could be:

- (name) to improve his/her communication skills
- (name) to develop his/her social skills
- (name) to develop skills to support independence
- (name) to maintain his/her health and fitness
- (name) to prepare for further education/employment when they leave school

Some broad specific goals could be:

- (name) to learn to prepare a meal to share with the family
- (name) to learn how to keep his/her room tidy/wash his/her clothes
- (name) to learn how to use a phone
- (name) to learn about relationships, sexuality and staying safe
- (name) to learn to use public transport
- (name) to learn and practise money management skills
- (name) to do some work experience, do a TAFE course, learn job-ready skills, prepare a resume
- (name) to go to the SWAN Youth Engaging Successfully (YES Program) to develop social, communication, and independence skills
- (name) to go to a range of recreation, sport and community activities such as Scouts, and develop community connections and skills
- (name) to be included in after school care and holiday program activities
- Funding for Apps/Communication aids to help (name) communicate

There are usually 2 short term and 3 long term goals in an NDIS Plan (although you can have fewer or more than this if preferred). It's often a good idea to keep your goals broad and flexible, as your teenager's needs and goals can change during the year. For example, your broad goal may be to improve self-help and daily living skills, and the specific goals may be things like learning money skills.

When you are pre-planning, it is important to understand that the NDIS won't cover supports, resources and equipment that are the responsibility of other government services (such as health or education) to provide.

NDIS won't fund fees for activities which all families must pay, but if your high school aged child needs, for example, specialised coaching because of their disability, the NDIS may contribute to the cost if it is more than regular classes or coaching. NDIS won't usually cover gym fees but may, depending on how it is related to a person's disability. NDIS may fund assessments, fitness program design and sessions with an exercise physiologist. Support workers can help with skills development, at home or in community settings, and be mentors and role models in community and social situations, as well as helping your young person get around.

For yourself, you may want to learn how to help your child meet their goals, or you may want to learn other information and skills related to caring for your child. You can include a goal in your child's plan under 'Training for parents', such as attending workshops for parents.

Consumables

NDIS may fund items such as continence aids (eg. nappies), waterproof sheets and wipes for children aged 5yrs and over, and clothing to maintain hygiene such as incontinence or period underwear. If your child needs these, it is recommended that you ask for consumables in their plan.

NDIS Social Media support networks

Here are some online groups you can join to share or find information with other NDIS participants and families:

- NDIS in WA Peer Support Facebook group
- NDIS Grassroots Facebook group
- NDIS Self Management Hub Facebook group

You can also find peer support on a range of things including NDIS online by joining:

- SWAN Group – South West Autism Network Facebook group
- Disability Peer Support South West WA Facebook group



Your Rights - NDIS

People who receive NDIS funding and supports have a number of fundamental rights. This includes the right to quality services to meet their needs, the right to choose and control their services, the right to be safe when using services, and the right to make complaints.

The NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Commission is the organisation responsible for upholding people's rights and taking complaints relating to the NDIS.

swanautism.org.au/ndis-participant-rights



Therapy

What kinds of therapies might your child need?

Every child is different and needs different kinds of support. Some therapies work to help a child's development by teaching skills, while others may focus on providing positive behaviour support. Your child's NDIS plan will include funding for assessments, therapy, and parent training in a section of their NDIS plan called Capacity Building - Daily Living. You will be able to choose therapists to assess your child's needs, and work with them during the year to build their skills. Here are some of the different kinds of therapy:

Speech Pathology

If your child needs help with speech, communication, and comprehension, you and your child can work with a Speech Pathologist (sometimes called a speech therapist). They can also help children who have difficulties with feeding/eating.

Psychology

Psychologists help children with understanding and managing their emotions, learning social skills and interaction, staying safe, and positive behaviour support. They also help parents with understanding their child's needs, and how to support them.



Occupational Therapy

Occupational Therapists help children to develop skills for daily life such as eating, dressing and toileting so they can become more independent. This involves supporting the child with their fine and gross motor difficulties, sensory issues (e.g., over-sensitivity to noise, light, smell, and touch), organisation skills and information processing.

Physiotherapy

Autistic people sometimes experience difficulties with low muscle tone, low core strength and gross motor skills such as walking, running, cycling and climbing stairs. Physiotherapy can help to improve their skills to help them improve their fitness and take part in activities and sport.

Podiatry

Many autistic children toe-walk. Spending a lot of time toe-walking can cause problems with feet and ankles, such as the Achilles tendon becoming too short as they grow. Podiatrists and physiotherapists can both help with improving foot and ankle flexibility and strength.

Alternative therapies

Alternative therapies are therapies that are outside of conventional medical and allied health practice. You might see these advertised online, or well-meaning people may tell you about them. However, the benefits are generally not supported by rigorous scientific testing, and some are actually harmful.

Evidence Based

When you're choosing a type of therapy, it's important to look for 'evidence-based' approaches - that is, interventions that have scientific evidence to show they work for autistic children. Seeking advice from autistic adults who have experienced these therapies can be helpful. Be cautious and use your judgement when considering interventions that haven't been scientifically tested. It's also important to remember that NDIS will only fund therapies and interventions which are evidence-based.

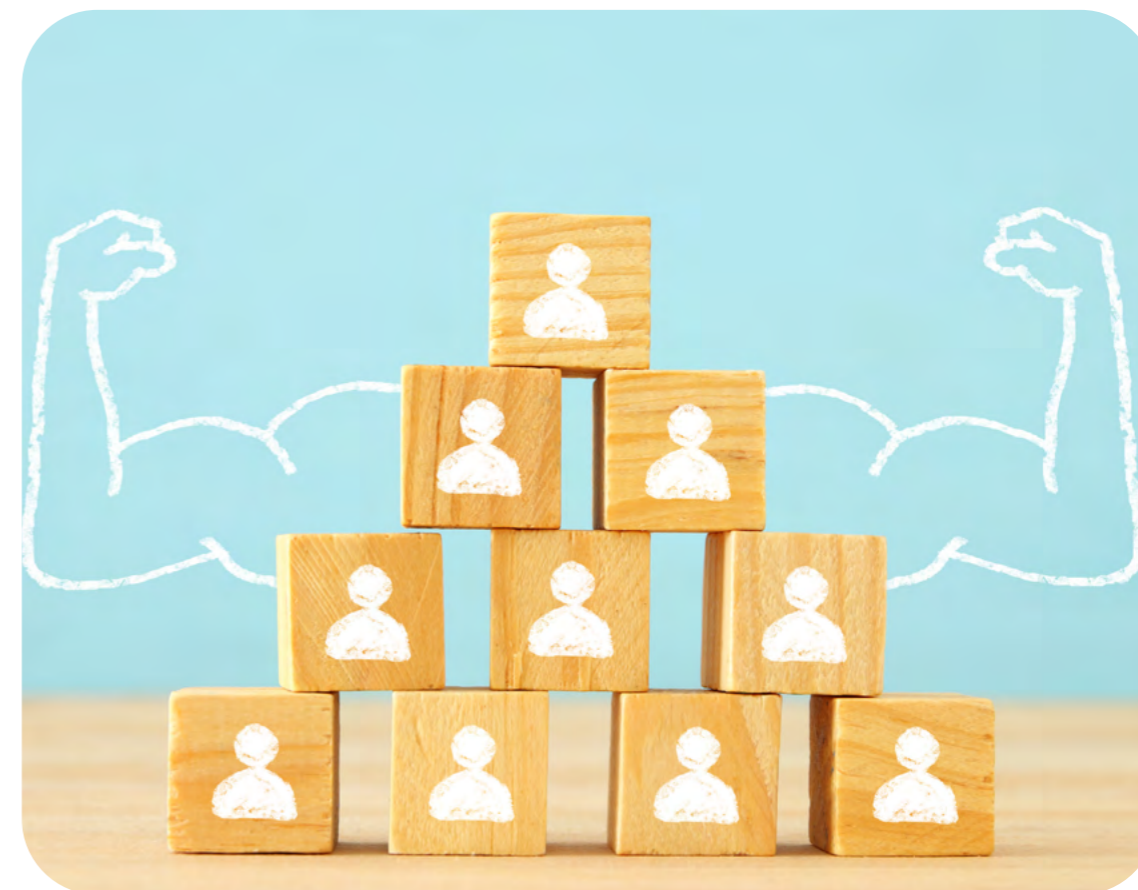
Here are some other terms you will probably come across relating to therapy:

Child and Family-centred Approach

Therapists will work in partnership with families to better understand their unique circumstances, and to help parents decide what strategies will best suit their child and their family. You should always be involved in setting goals and talking about how you can work towards them.

Multidisciplinary Team Approach

Each type of therapy is a 'discipline'. Multidisciplinary means that your child sees two or more different types of therapists who each work with your child as part of a team (e.g. Speech Pathologist, Psychologist, and Occupational Therapist). In multidisciplinary therapy, the therapists share what they know about your child and what therapy they are doing with each other, to make sure that your child's needs are understood, and that therapy is holistic.





This section contains some basic, useful information and links to help you find what you need in the health system, as well as some information specifically around disability and health.

The WA Health System

Western Australia's health system is a mix of different services. Some are provided by Australian and State Governments, and some by private healthcare providers.

The Healthy WA website provides a lot of information about the different kinds of services that make up the health system in WA. They explain what these services are and give links to more information.

The link below gives you an overview of the system and covers some useful information on public and private healthcare, choosing to be a public or private patient, health insurance and different types of hospital care – inpatient or outpatient.

swanautism.org.au/doh-wa-health-overview

General Practitioners (GP)

Unless the situation is life threatening, your local doctor (GP) is the first person you should contact when your child is unwell or has a minor injury. It's a good idea to build a relationship with a GP so that they get to know your child as a person, and understand their disability and any ongoing health conditions they may have.

Finding a GP

To find a GP in your local area use the following link and enter your postcode - swanautism.org.au/doh-wa-service-finder

GP Services

As well as going to your GP when you are sick, GPs provide some services to help you stay well, identify health problems, and manage your care. These services can include annual health assessments and GP-managed health plans.



GP Manage Health plans

People with disability are usually eligible for GP managed health plans. The GP can set up a team care approach and make referrals to other health and allied health practitioners such as therapists. You can do this even if you have therapy in your NDIS plan.

swanautism.org.au/doh-disease-mgmt

Health Check-ups

People with intellectual disability can have a full health check-up with their GP every year, with a Medicare rebate. Medicare calls this an annual “health assessment for people with an intellectual disability”. Here is the link to information about the Medicare-covered annual health assessment:

swanautism.org.au/doh-medicare-assessment

HealthDirect

If your child is unwell or injured, and you’re unsure what to do, you can contact HealthDirect 24 hours a day for free advice by phoning 1800 022 222.

You can also visit the HealthDirect website to check symptoms, find information about health, and find a health service near you.

swanautism.org.au/health-direct



Emergency

In an emergency, you may need to call an ambulance for your child or visit the nearest hospital Emergency Department.

If you need urgent treatment for a serious injury or illness call 000 for an ambulance.

Emergency departments in public hospitals provide free emergency care to anyone who needs immediate treatment for a serious injury or illness.

You don’t need an appointment to go to an emergency department. They are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

In the Perth metropolitan area, WA Health emergency department doctors and nurses are always on duty. Country hospitals and nursing posts can arrange emergency services.

This link gives you the name of each Emergency Hospital and the average amount of time you need to wait to be seen by medical staff.

swanautism.org.au/doh-wa-emergency

In Country WA, hospitals and nursing posts provide or can arrange emergency services. Ambulance services or the Royal Flying Doctor Service can also help you access these services. You can find health services information for your area by using the National Health Services Directory:

swanautism.org.au/doh-wa-service-finder

This is the link to search for your closest GP, Emergency Department, Pharmacy, Mental Health, and Hospital Service. Enter your postcode and choose the type of service you need.

swanautism.org.au/doh-wa-service-finder



Supporting your teen in an emergency

Emergency visits to hospital can be very frightening for autistic children. It's important to tell health professionals that your child is autistic, so that they can better support their needs. Some things which may help your child cope with health treatment are:

- Bringing a comfort item with you, if you have time.
- If your child uses a communication system, bring it with you.
- Asking ambulance staff to turn internal lights and sirens off (if appropriate).
- Ask emergency department staff for a separate room (if available), and for the lights to be dimmed.
- Ask medical staff to demonstrate medical treatments on mum, dad, or a toy, to help your child understand what will be done to them.
- Use your smart phone to search for videos or social stories about medical procedures, to help your child understand what will happen. Make sure that you watch any videos first, to make sure they are helpful rather than scary.
- Ask medical staff to carefully explain to your child what will be done to them, before doing it.
- Take snacks that your child likes in case they get hungry (just check with emergency department staff that its ok to eat first).
- Activities to keep them occupied – books, games etc.
- Charging cords for any electrical devices (i.e., iPad, phone).

Hospital Admission Forms

You can download these forms and use when your child is going to hospital, either urgently or for a planned admission. Families can complete the forms, to be sure important information is seen by the treating professionals and is in the medical record.

swanautism.org.au/ddwa-hospital-forms

Medicare

Through the Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) program, a child aged 0-13yrs can be referred by a paediatrician or psychiatrist to the following allied health services for a Medicare rebate:

- Up to 4 diagnostic/assessment services from psychologists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, audiologists, optometrists, orthoptists, or physiotherapists to assist the referring Dr with diagnosis, treatment, and management.
- Up to 20 treatment services from psychologists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, audiologists, optometrists, orthoptists, or physiotherapists (available up to age 15yrs, as long as the referral is made before the child's 13th birthday).

These are the maximum number of services you can claim a Medicare rebate for, and don't renew each year. You can find out more here:

swanautism.org.au/doh-wa-helping-children-autism

Medicare also provides a Safety Net to help people with high medical costs. If your out-of-pocket medical costs reach the threshold between 1st January and 31st December each year, you will receive a higher amount back when claiming from Medicare.

Find out more here:

swanautism.org.au/medicare-safety-nets

NDIS and Health

NDIS doesn't cover services that are seen as the responsibility of the Health system, but there are some health-related supports that can be included in an NDIS plan, so it can be confusing and hard to work out which treatments and therapies are covered by which system.

Here is what the NDIS and Health have agreed on:

swanautism.org.au/ndis-health



Disability Discrimination Act



Your Rights – Health

All Australians including people with disabilities of all ages, have legal rights when it comes to health services. This is covered by the Disability Discrimination Act and also by the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights.

Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights

The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights describes the rights of patients and other people using the Australian health system. These rights help to make sure that, wherever and whenever care is provided, it is of high quality and is safe.

The charter applies to all health settings anywhere in Australia, including public hospitals, private hospitals, general practice, and other community environments. It allows patients, consumers, families, carers, and service providers to have a common understanding of the rights of people receiving health care.

You can find the charter here:

swanautism.org.au/healthcare-rights

Here is a Guide for Patients and Carers about the charter:

swanautism.org.au/guide-patients

Making complaints about health services in WA

You can make a complaint about health services if you've had your rights denied or you feel that you've received bad care. It's a good idea to try first to resolve the problem with the health professional involved, but if that's not possible, or you need some advice or help, talk to the patient liaison officer or representative at the health care service.

Health and Disability Services Complaints Office (HaDSCO)

You can also contact the Health and Disability Services Complaints Office. HaDSCO is a WA independent statutory authority providing a service to help you resolve complaints relating to health, disability, and mental health services.

Here is information about how to make a complaint about a health service:

swanautism.org.au/wa-health-complaints

Care Opinion Australia

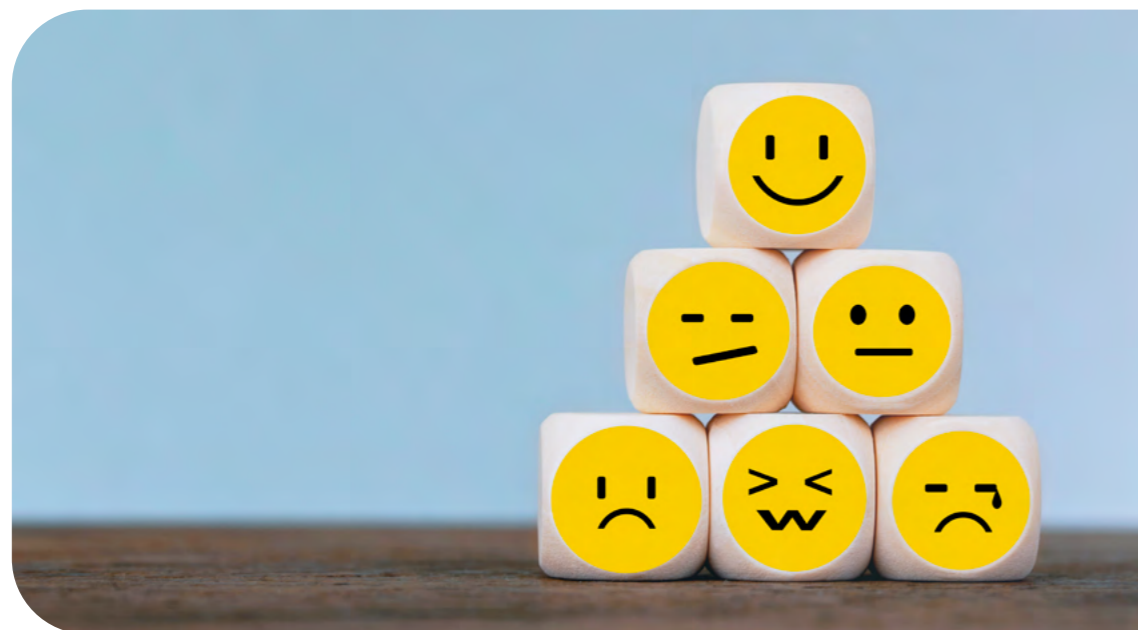
You can share your experience on the Care Opinion website. It is an independent service that aims to help make health services better.

Over 50 health services and organisations are currently subscribed to Care Opinion Australia. These include hospitals and hospital networks, primary health networks, mental health services, community health centres, government departments, and other health not-for-profit organisations.

Here's how it works:

1. Go to the Care Opinion website: swanautism.org.au/care-opinion
2. Share your story of using a health service
3. We send your story to staff so that they can learn from it
4. You might get a response directly from the health service such as an apology, an offer to discuss your complaint, or be asked to advise how to improve their service
5. Your story might help staff to change services





Puberty, sexuality, relationships and staying safe

Autism doesn't affect when puberty starts, so you can expect your autistic child to begin to show signs at around the same age as other children. This is around 10 to 11 years for girls and 11 to 13 years for boys.

While the age may be similar, an autistic child may find it more difficult and take longer to understand that their body will change during puberty, and may be worried about what is happening to them. So it's a good idea to prepare early to help your child get used to the idea and understand the changes before they happen.

It's important to be clear and direct about what will happen, using clear and direct communication and language your child understands. You can use visuals and social stories to explain puberty and help you answer your child's questions.

The teenage years can be challenging for any teenager (and their parents/carers) as they struggle to understand not only bodily changes but increased and sometimes confusing emotions and feelings. This time can be even more complicated and challenging for many autistic teens.

It can be hard to know where to start with what can be difficult subjects for both teenagers and parents to think about and discuss. But there are some really good resources for parents and children on puberty, sexual development, sexuality and relationships.

Here are some links to good information and support:

SWAN

SWAN has a resource library you can borrow from. Type 'puberty', or 'protective behaviours' into the search function and you'll find dozens of resources, including some specifically for children with disabilities.

swanautism.org.au

SECCA

SECCA is a non-profit organisation that helps people with disabilities to learn about puberty, sexuality, relationships, sexual health and staying safe. They have developed several resources for teachers, carers, parents, professionals and trusted adults to use. Some resources can be borrowed and some you can download from their website: swanautism.org.au/secca

Sexuality, Relationships and Your Rights

This is a comprehensive resource produced by SECCA. SWAN has partnered with SECCA to make hard copies available in the south west of WA; contact us to get your copy.

You can also download it free here:

swanautism.org.au/ddwa-relationship-rights

SECCA App

SECCA have developed an app on relationships and sexuality education for people of all ages and abilities. It has in-built lesson plans on a wide range of topics and over 2000 images, but is fully customisable for each individual, including the ability to upload your own images. You can find it here:

swanautism.org.au/secca-app

Raising Children Network

Sexuality and Relationships: Teenagers with autism

swanautism.org.au/rc-sex-autistic-teens



Staying Safe – protective behaviours

Protective behaviours are life and personal safety skills to help children, young people and adults keep themselves safe. It's important for all children to learn protective behaviours. It's especially important for children with disabilities who may be more vulnerable for reasons including communication difficulties and bullying.

Starting early is important in keeping children safe. For example, teaching kids the correct names for body parts can help them understand and communicate about what is ok and what is not ok when it comes to their rights over their own bodies.

Schools include protective behaviours education in the curriculum, and teachers are trained to provide a safe environment and to recognise and support children who may not be safe. You can find out more about protective behaviours here:

WA Child Safety Services

WA Child Safety Services provides child safety education, including the Protective Behaviours program. Their workshops and training educate and empower children and young people, and help parents, educators, and other professionals create safer communities.

They have a range of other resources you can download free from their website.

swanautism.org.au/wacss

'Talk soon. Talk often' is a comprehensive and practical guide for parents of children of all ages.

swanautism.org.au/talk-soon-talk-often

SWAN have print copies of this booklet available for free in our Busselton and Bunbury offices, as well as copies of 'Relationships, sex and other stuff', and the combined book 'Girls & Puberty / Boys & Puberty'. Please email info@swanautism.org.au to request a copy of these resources.

Cyber safety and bullying

Most of us use the internet regularly for staying in touch, finding and sharing information, learning, creating and doing our banking and shopping. It's how young people stay in touch with their friends and keep up with what's happening. There are so many positives, but also many things that can go wrong.

Unfortunately, as well as general risks such as financial scams, young people are specifically targeted online by predators due to their inexperience. Teenagers who are autistic may experience additional risks when they are using the internet if they have difficulty with understanding and



communication. So, we need to have a good understanding of the internet to help our children to stay safe online. This includes making sure they have the right information to help them make the right choices, and being there to support them.

Online bullying is sadly common, and it can have a devastating impact on young people. Known as Cyberbullying, this can include sending abusive messages, hurtful images or videos, nasty online gossip, tricking, excluding or humiliating people. Autistic teenagers may find they are more likely to be targeted, so it's vital that parents understand this kind of behaviour and can support their children to avoid it and manage any situations that occur.

Here are some links to good information and support to help your child be safe online:

E-Safety Commissioner

This easy to navigate website has very comprehensive and readable information for children, young people, parents and educators and other community members. It covers all the key issues about online safety, what to do and how to get help. swanautism.org.au/esafety

Here is their Easy English guide to being safe online:

swanautism.org.au/esafety-easy-english

Think U Know

Information resources and training on staying safe online.

swanautism.org.au/think-u-know

Easy Read guide to staying safe online:

swanautism.org.au/think-u-know-easy-read

Down Syndrome Australia

'Social Media and Online Safety' is a Plain English guide on staying safe when using the internet. It includes information about using social media, as well as online services such as online shopping, banking and dating. There is also information on recognising and staying safe regarding cyber bullying, cybercrime, grooming and personal sexual content.

swanautism.org.au/down-syndrome-social-media

Education and Life after School

This section includes practical information to help you and your teen navigate through high school and prepare for the transition to adult life.

If you are looking for information and help on how to choose a high school and prepare your child for starting high school, please see SWAN's 7 to 12 years booklet.



Education and the NDIS

Although the NDIS can fund a range of specialised supports for high school-aged children with a disability, it will not fund anything that should be the responsibility of the education system. Schools must continue to provide 'reasonable adjustment' for students with disability so that they can learn on an equal basis with other children.

The school will work with you to develop your child's educational goals and create an Individual Educational Plan (IEP). Therapy plans should be consistent and directly related to the outcomes in your child's IEP.

The NDIS will fund allied health and other therapy supports such as speech therapy, occupational therapy and other allied health specialists depending on what each student needs because of their disability. These can be provided at school.

You can find more information on the NDIS website:

swanautism.org.au/ndis-school-education

Here is a summary of what NDIS funds and what education systems can fund for children with disability.

NDIS funds:

- Self-care at school related to the student's disability, such as support with eating.
- Specialised training of teachers and other staff about the specific personal support needs of a student with disability.
- Specialist transport required because of the student's disability (does not replace parental responsibility).
- Transportable equipment such as a wheelchair or personal communication devices.
- Therapies a family and school have agreed may be delivered during school time but are not for educational purposes.

Education systems fund:

- Teachers, education assistants, and other supports e.g., Auslan interpreters.
- General support, resources, and training for teachers and other staff.
- Therapy delivered in schools for education or training purposes, such as allied health practitioners helping teachers and trainers adjust curriculums.
- Aids and equipment to make curriculums accessible, such as modified computer hardware, software, Braille textbooks, other accessible information formats.
- Adjustments to buildings such as ramps, lifts, accessible toilets, and hearing-loops.
- Transport for educational or training activities such as excursions, field trips and sporting carnivals.
- Day-to-day supervision of students at school, including behavioural support.

You can find more information on the NDIS website:
swanautism.org.au/ndis-school-education



Before school starts

Starting High school is a big step for any child, but there are a few things that can make it a smoother transition. Once you know which school your child will be going to, begin to familiarise them with the school and staff, practise skills that will help when they go to school, and talk a lot about the good things about going to school, including using social stories or a photo book.

Working with the school

A good working partnership with your child's school and its staff becomes even more important in the high school years. Not only is your child continuing their education, but the school environment is different, and learning is becoming more focused on their future beyond school. In addition, teenagers are dealing with puberty, changes in how they look and feel, and their concerns about the world around them. It isn't an easy time for any teenager, and autistic teens may find all these changes hard to manage.

An effective partnership relies on good communication, information sharing, respect, and both family and school working in different but complimentary ways towards common goals. Free resources and training are available for parents and teachers supporting autistic students from Positive Partnerships: swanautism.org.au/positive-partnerships

Communication

It's important to have regular, open communication with your child's teachers, so you can share useful information, celebrate successes and deal with any issues before they become more serious concerns. If your child has difficulties communicating, an open line to school staff is even more important.

Parents/carers need to know what is happening at school, to talk with their child about how things are going. Similarly, it's important for teachers to know if there is anything significant happening in their student's life that could be having an impact on their learning. Together, parents/carers and teachers can work out some useful goals, strategies and have agreement on things such as homework.

Many families and high school teaching staff find that email works well, being quick and easy and involving whoever needs to be part of the communication. Some families may like to continue using a communication book if they have

used one during primary school and if it is still seen as appropriate – including by your teenager. It's important to establish a system that works and is acceptable for everyone.

Don't forget to look out for general notes from school and read the school newsletter as well. Schools put out lots of information and it can be easy to miss things. It's a good idea to have a simple system at home to keep on top of information, events, meetings and things you have to do.

Your child's legal rights

Hopefully, you won't need to use legal information, but it is always useful to know about education rights just in case.

According to law, Australian children with disability, in every state and territory, have the right to access and participate in education on the same basis as children without disability.

The law that covers these rights is the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992. The Act also has Education Standards that set out what schools and other education providers must do.

Schools and other education providers must not treat children with disability differently from other children. This is discrimination. They must also provide 'reasonable adjustments'. This includes things such as support staff, equipment, materials, modifications and other things each child needs to support them to learn. This does not mean being told your child should learn in a separate learning environment because that is where the specialist support is located. Children with disability have the right to the supports they need to learn alongside other children in mainstream settings.

If the school you choose will not accept your child into the mainstream or provide the support they need, you can get support from an advocacy organisation to negotiate with the school. You can also get help to make a formal complaint to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Knowing these rights gives you the knowledge and confidence that you can approach any school in any system and know that by law they must treat your child the same as any other child.

Getting to know your teenager

Before the school year begins, update any information you may have previously put together for primary school. Make sure you have information for the school so that teachers understand the support your child needs, their communication, interests, dislikes and triggers and useful strategies, to support their learning and inclusion. The information should include any health issues, access needs and therapy goals.

Think about the areas where your child has specific support needs such as communication, self-help skills, mental health, or sensory processing issues. Provide school staff with specific information on how they can support your child. For example, allowing your child have breaks to move around, or letting them wear headphones or have comfort items in the classroom.

Create a new information file or One Page Profile (OPP), which provides a current picture of your child's strengths, how they communicate, what they enjoy, what motivates them, and how they need and want to be supported. These are especially useful in a high school setting where your young person will come into contact with many more teaching and other school staff, providing the really important information all on one easy to read page. There are some great age-appropriate One Page Profile templates you can download, and at this age it is really important for your teen to be fully involved in creating the profile. See page 51 for extra information on OPPs.

Individual Education Plans

The school will work with you to develop your child's educational goals and create an Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

IEPs are sometimes called Individual Learning Plans, Personalised Learning Plans or other names depending on the school or school system. They can also look different, but they must contain all the information needed to ensure children with disabilities have an appropriate learning program to meet their individual needs. They are an action plan so they should be clear and easily understood by everyone involved.

What is in an IEP?

While each child is unique, your child's IEP is likely to focus on some or all of the following:

- Academic strategies and progress
- Communication strategies and progress
- Physical health and needs
- Independence skills, including building capacity to study and self-care
- Socialisation skills and peer connection issues
- General emotional well-being
- Self-regulation and behaviour skills



IEPs contain information about your child, goals for your child's learning and how the school will help your child work towards those goals; and the 'reasonable adjustments' the school will make to make sure your child has access to teaching, learning and the schooling experience generally.

What are reasonable adjustments?

Teachers understand that children learn in different ways, and they adapt the teaching environment, the curriculum and materials and how they teach, to suit the child. These kinds of changes are called adjustments. By law, schools must make balanced and fair changes. These are known as reasonable adjustments. Your child's adjustments should be included in their IEP.

The only reasons why schools may refuse to make an adjustment for a child with disability are that:

- It would be too hard for the school,
- It would be dangerous for people in the school, or
- It would be against the law.

When schools choose adjustments, or when they refuse to make adjustments, they must explain their choice to the student and their family. If you disagree with the school's decision, you can complain to the school's education authority. You can also get advice on whether the school's decision meets the Disability Standards for Education and seek advocacy help if you need to take action. Sussex Street Community Law Service is the disability discrimination lawyer in WA. Their services are free. swanautism.org.au/sussex-st-comm-law

Who comes to IEP meetings?

IEP meetings, sometimes called case conferences, involve your child's teacher, maybe their education assistant, the school's learning support coordinator if they have one, and school administrator. A school psychologist and therapists who work with your child may also be present. Importantly, parents are involved in the discussion and decisions.

One or both parents can attend, and you can have another person with you if you wish. This could be a friend, family member or other person you trust to help you.

It's important to prepare for these meetings to get the best IEP for your child.

- Think about your overall vision for your child, to share with and help guide the school.
- Think about some specific goals to go in the plan.
- Decide on your 'bottom line'. While you need to be firm about your vision, the school may want to negotiate on some details. You need to think about what, if any, compromises you are happy to make.
- Gather all relevant documentation and information.
- If you have a partner or other person with you, make sure you both know your goals for the meeting and the way you will approach discussions, so you are 'on the same page'. Make sure any support person understands their role. You may just want moral support, or someone to take notes. You may want them to remind you or help with information as needed. Talk about their role beforehand so it is clear, and you can feel confident about their support.
- You may be asked to sign a copy of the IEP at the end of the meeting to show you agree with it. It is reasonable to say you want a copy and a couple of days to read through it. You may find you want to ask questions or have further discussions before you agree to the IEP. You can also seek advice from an advocate or your child's therapist before signing.

There are some useful resources to help you with the IEP process. You can download these free:

Your Child's IEP – Guide for Families from All Means All, the Australian Alliance for Inclusive Education. swanautism.org.au/ama-iep-guide

Planning for Personalised Learning and Support, Education Department of WA. swanautism.org.au/dept-education-personalised-learning

One Page Profiles

A one-page profile is a great way to communicate important information about a person all in one easy-to-find space.

You can use them in all kinds of settings to help support people of all ages. For example, you might create a child's first one-page profile when they are just about to start going to childcare. Starting kindy, pre-primary or school are also good times to create or update your child's profile.

Because the information is all on one page, this means that anyone reading it can quickly see what is most important to know about the person. The one-page profile is a good ongoing reference for teachers, child care workers, and other support staff, and helpful for new or relief staff so they don't have to read lots of information before they can start their work.

Each one-page profile has the following categories of information in it:

- Name of the person
- What is important to me
- What people like and admire about me
- How I want to be supported

How to Make a One Page Profile

There are lots of downloadable age-appropriate templates you can use. Teenagers may like to choose one that suits them best. You can make your own but be sure it has the same categories of information as we've listed above. These have been shown over many years to be the most effective.

Sometimes parents/carers work by themselves to write their child's profile. With a very young child, this is fine, and parents/carers do know their children and the support they need well. But as your child gets older, it is better to ask other people who know them well to take part in writing the profile. You might be surprised that other people often add some very positive and useful information that you might not have known or thought about. Older children and adults can either write their own or get help to create or contribute to their profile.

One-page profiles need to be updated regularly so that the information is current. It's a good idea to put the date on the profile.

This website has lots of helpful information on creating a one-page profile: swanautism.org.au/wordpress-profiles



Profile Example

Name: 

What is important to me

Photo

What people like about me

How to support me 

Profile Example

Name: Sandra (Sandy) **Age: 15** **Year: 10** 

What is important to me

- Being heard
- Having people I trust around me
- My friends and family
- My 2 dogs (Angus and Suzi)
- Having fun
- Drawing and painting
- Being included
- Not being treated differently because I am autistic

Photo 

What people like about me

- My determination
- My sense of humour
- My ability to solve problems
- My honesty

How to support me 

- Allow me to have access to my fidget tools and/or regular sensory breaks, particularly in Math as this subject makes me feel more anxious than others
- Use a calm voice (yelling makes me go into freeze mode and I will not be able to concentrate)
- If you see me playing with my earrings it means I am starting to get overwhelmed. Please suggest I get a drink or take a note to the office so that I have a chance to calm myself

Outside School Hours Care

Outside School Hours Care for Teenagers with Disability

If you are looking for before school, after school and holiday programs for your teenager, support funding now needs to be included in their NDIS plan. Discuss this with your LAC at plan review time, and also ask for information about programs in your area. Your child's school may run or know about nearby programs, or you can look up registered service providers on the NDIS MyPlace portal, and you can also look in your local government community directory.



Life after School

Thinking about your child leaving school can be daunting. There are so many unknowns that it can sometimes be hard to imagine what life will be like for them and for your family when they take that step into adult life, so this section contains information on a range of options you can think and talk about with your teenager. We've included information on funding, services and resources to support them to explore and work towards their chosen post-school goals. While there's still a lot to think about and do, we hope this will make the way ahead clearer and easier.

The best advice is to begin talking with your child early – it's never too early to have conversations about what they might like to do when they grow up, but it is something we should talk about well before leaving school is upon us. The more your child is involved in this early exploration of ideas, the better the chance of good decisions and outcomes.

A good place to begin discussions is by exploring your child's personal qualities and skills and their strengths, along with their interests and the things they enjoy doing. By observing these and talking about them, as well as the things they really don't like or have any interest in, together you can come up with some ideas for what they might like to try.

Work or further education?

For some young people, going on to further education might be their preference. Some may want to do some training to get the skills and qualifications they need to get the job of their choice. Other young people might want to start working and earning a wage as soon as possible when they leave school. We have included information to help you explore the possibilities and navigate the different pathways.

The role of your child's school

Regardless of the kind of school or school system, education providers have a responsibility to help students with disability transition successfully to post-school life. This begins with developing a plan to guide their transition. The student, parents/carers and school staff come together to develop a plan.

Your early discussions with your child will be invaluable in this process, especially when you are developing the vision statement that sets out their hopes, dreams and aspirations for the future – what they would like to be doing years after leaving school. Your own expectations and focus will also help set the scene.

While this is an important step in the transition process, the vision is not set in stone. As your child continues their education, takes part in work experience and is more involved in the community, their earlier ideas and goals may develop further or change. The transition plan needs to be flexible and respond to these changes to support the student.

What is in an Individual Transition Plan?

An ITP is an action plan, a statement of responsibility and an accountability document.

It should contain information about your child's:

- Developing skills and understandings; and
- Changing goals, aspirations, interests and needs.

It also needs to include:

- Changes in your child's environments; and
- Information about new and emerging future options.

It must also include ways of measuring the ongoing success of the strategies in the plan, to see what worked and what might need to change. The ITP needs to set clear achievable goals that can be measured. This helps everyone involved to stay focused and work together to the same goals.

Importantly, you and your teenager should be involved in an ongoing way with developing what is in the ITP and in how it is used to support your child's transition. ITP meetings are a chance to work together with the school to talk about how things are going, sort out any issues, share information, do further planning and celebrate successes.

You can find out more about the process of developing an individual transition plan here. It is from the state education system, but all school systems follow a similar process:

swanautism.org.au/does-my-life-my-plan



Work experience

Work experience is a chance for high school students in Year 10 to learn new skills, increase their confidence and help them work out what they want to do when they leave school. They can even add the work experience to their school leaver resume.

Your child's school is responsible for providing opportunities for them to try out what it's like to be in the workforce, and there should be discussions at ITP meetings about what kind of work experience would be useful for your child. Parents/carers can also be involved in providing practical help to find work experience opportunities. For example, if you know someone who has a business that could offer a useful placement for your child, you could ask them if they would like to help then pass on their details to the school to follow up. Your involvement could open up greater opportunities than if you leave it all up to the school. Sometimes, schools can have low expectations when it comes to work experience for students with disabilities. However, your involvement in the ITP and with work experience will help them understand that your child has the right to expect real work experience just like other students.

School organised work experience is often just for one week at a time.

However, you can ask for some longer periods or ongoing work experience or volunteer opportunities. This is especially important for a young person who needs extra time and support in adjusting to new situations and learning new skills.

Where can we find work experience opportunities?

There are all kinds of work experience your child could try. It's always best if you can find something that fits with their interests and will help them develop some useful skills. Here are some ideas to talk about together:

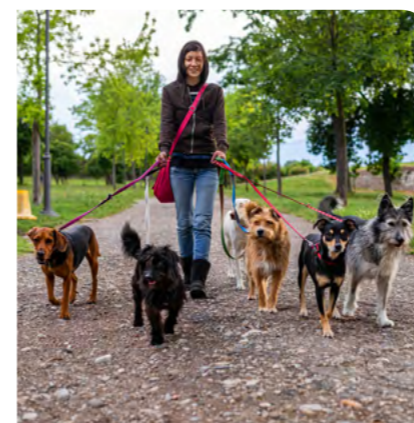


Primary schools/kindergartens/child care – If your teenager is interested in working with children, they might like to try work experience in one of these settings.

Digital media – For young people with an interest in working in information systems, web development, digital design or media communication.

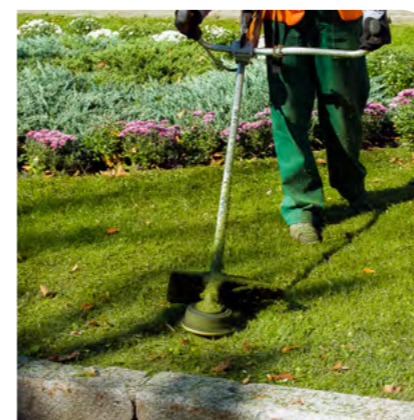
Op Shops – Work experience in an op shop can provide a range of skills to suit different abilities. It might be hard to get work experience in a busy retail store, but op shop experience can give some idea of whether working in retail might interest your teenager.

Hospitality – There are many kinds of work in hospitality, and it's a good way to learn a variety of skills and help your teenager think about whether this might be a career path for them.



Animal care – Vet clinics, animal shelters and pet shops are a popular choice of work experience for animal lovers, who can learn all kinds of skills to help them think about employment options. Zoos and aquariums often offer work experience to school students.

Research centre – Young people who are interested in science may like to try working in a research centre. These may be government or private and are sometimes attached to universities or hospitals.



Sports clubs, recreation centres – Community sports clubs, gyms and recreation centres are often glad of an extra person to help in a range of roles. If you are already part of a club you can ask if they would have some work experience for your child.

Local government – Local councils provide a wide variety of services – think libraries, gardening, administrative work, IT and many more - and can be a good place to approach for work experience.

What support will my child get for work experience?

Schools are required to ensure students get the support they need to be safe and have a useful experience. Ask the school what support your child will get, including how they will get to and from their placement, what support they will get from school staff in the workplace, and who you can contact if you have any questions or concerns. See the section on NDIS Employment Support for other supports your teenager may be able to access.

Employment

As well as earning your own money, having a job helps you be independent, learn new skills, meet new people and take pride in being a valued member of the workforce, contributing to society. So it's important that young people who are autistic get opportunities and the support they need to be employed.

From Year 10 in high school and into adult life, there are options and support. However, the systems can be quite complex to navigate. This section provides you with some information about employment as well as some tips and links to more information, support services and practical resources to help your autistic teen find employment that works for them.

Open Employment or Supported Employment?

Open Employment means working in a regular job in the community alongside everyone else and getting a fair wage.

Supported Employment is the term used for working in a workplace that is just for people with disabilities. These workplaces are called Australian Disability Enterprises (ADEs) and used to be known as sheltered workshops. People in ADEs are supported to work and receive very low wages on top of their Disability Support Pension (DSP).

It's important to know that even if your child needs a lot of support, they can get ongoing support to work in open employment too. There are different ways they can get support, depending on what they want to do, the kinds of support they need, and how much work they can do each week. Some employment support is available from the NDIS and some from Disability Employment Services (DES) that is available whether or not you have NDIS funds. See DES for further information:

swanautism.org.au/workforce-aust-providers



NDIS Employment Support

Finding and Keeping a Job

For young people who have an NDIS plan, employment support can be available as early as Year 10. While the school is responsible for providing supported work experience that is part of the curriculum, students aged from 14 years and 9 months or in Year 10, who have an NDIS plan, can ask for funds to help them with 'Finding and Keeping a Job'. They need to have an employment related goal in their NDIS plan. It doesn't mean they are expected to get a job at that age, but to begin getting ready for employment. This can include help with planning for employment, skills training, writing a resume and work experience.

You will need to ensure this is requested at your child's plan review, so it is available by the time they need it during Year 10. You can look up service providers that are registered to provide this type of support or find your own suitable staff if your child's plan is self-managed or plan-managed. If your child has Support Coordination, they should be able to help you find the support your child needs. NDIS Finding and Keeping a Job funding can be requested by anyone of working age who has an employment goal in their NDIS plan.

School Leavers Employment Supports (SLES)

SLES is a support for school leavers to help them transition from school into employment. It is designed to help with building a pathway to open employment, including 'try and test' work experiences, building workplace skills, travel training and other activities to help young people transition from school into employment, or link with ongoing employment support (such as through a DES).

It is important to understand that SLES is not a program, but individual support funding in a young person's plan. The funds will be allocated for the 'reasonable and necessary' supports each Year 12 student needs.

SLES funds may be included in a student's plan during the final year of school, either in a first plan or plan review during that year so that they can access the funds during the last few months of school. SLES can now also be accessed by people up to 22 years of age. You can find more information on SLES here: swanautism.org.au/ndis-leaving-school

To find service providers to help with employment support using NDIS funding, look for those registered under 'Assist to Access/Maintain Employment' in the Provider Finder in the myplace portal.

Customised Employment

You might also like to look into Customised Employment to find the best fit and support for your teenager. Customised Employment is an individualised approach that fits a person's skills, interests, strengths and support needs while meeting the needs of business or the community for a service or product. This could mean they get a job within a business or organisation that is tailored to them. Or it could mean identifying a service or product that they could develop into a small business or 'microenterprise'.

People can use *Finding and Keeping a Job* or SLES funding for Customised Employment. This would give them one on one support to explore what work could mean for them, known as Discovery, and then work on individualised job creation.

You can find more information about Customised Employment here: swanautism.org.au/ideaswa-customised-employment

Here is some information about Microenterprises: swanautism.org.au/peer-connect-microenterprise

swanautism.org.au/ideaswa-microenterprise

Employment Resources

'Let's talk about work' is an NDIS booklet that tells you about how the NDIS can help with employment. You can also use it as a workbook to write down key information about your child's ability to work, their strengths, any barriers and the kinds of support they need. When you go to your child's planning meeting, make sure you take the booklet with you and use it when you talk with your LAC or planner. You can download it here:

swanautism.org.au/ndis-lets-talk-about-work

Developmental Disability WA 'Kick-Starting your Child's Career Journey' is a guide for families of young people with disability which contains really useful tips and information to help families plan constructively for their child's future employment.

swanautism.org.au/ddwa-kick-starting-childs-career

Down Syndrome Australia has a series of practical resources for people with disability, their families and employers to help plan for, find and keep employment. The resources for employees can be used as workbooks and are available in Plain English and Easy Read. You can download them free here:

swanautism.org.au/down-syndrome-resources



Further Education

Your son or daughter may decide they want to continue to study after school either to pursue their interests or to get qualifications or skills they need for their chosen career.

Young people who are autistic may be able to access some supports from the education provider and/or from NDIS. Each university has its own entry requirements and pathway and the kinds of supports they may be able to offer will vary. You and your child will need to explore these to work out what is available and what might be a good match for their interests and goals. Here are some useful links to start:

University of WA

UWA Uni pathway options:

swanautism.org.au/uwa-entry-pathways

UniAccess supports students with disability to stay healthy during their studies and perform at their academic best. This includes UWA's Specialist Mentoring Program for students with autism or related conditions, which includes a specially designed support program, peer mentoring and opportunities to meet other autistic students at social gatherings.

You can find information for students and families about UniAccess here:

swanautism.org.au/uwa-uniaccess

Murdoch University

Murdoch Uni pathway options:

swanautism.org.au/murdoch-uni-pathway

Murdoch has a team of disability advisors. They provide students with individualised support such as assistance with their studies, and help with coursework or exams. You can find out more here:

swanautism.org.au/murdoch-students-with-disability

Curtin University

Curtin Uni pathway options:

swanautism.org.au/curtin-pathways

Curtin's AccessAbility Services provides a range of support and assistance to help students with disability at university. You can find out more here:

swanautism.org.au/curtin-disability-support

Curtin has a Specialist Mentoring Program that provides support for autistic students with ASD: swanautism.org.au/curtin-autism-mentoring

Edith Cowan University (ECU)

swanautism.org.au/ecu-course-entry

ECU's Equity, Diversity and Disability Service provides students with support regarding their studies, as well as ensuring any reasonable adjustments are in place such as accessible study materials, alternative assessment and exam conditions and access to assistive equipment. You can find more information here: swanautism.org.au/ecu-disability-services

TAFE to Uni pathway finder

Students can do some studies at TAFE as a pathway to university. WA TAFE Colleges have formal arrangements with universities to allow TAFE Diploma and Advanced Diploma graduates to enter a university degree with advanced standing. Here is some more information on how this works:

swanautism.org.au/tafe-uni-pathway

TAFE

TAFE offers lots of different VET (Vocational Education and Training) opportunities in TAFE colleges across WA. TAFE comes under the WA Department for Training and Workforce Development, but each TAFE college decides what courses to offer and how it operates. You need to look locally to see what is available and also what supports your local TAFE has for students with disability.

South Regional TAFE

The Disability Liaison Officer and Student Services staff at South Regional TAFE can assist teachers, parents and students to plan for a successful transition to study at TAFE. Here are their contact details:

South Regional TAFE Student Services staff Bunbury campus – phone 6371 3245 or 0417 937 894, or email: StudentServices@srtafe.wa.edu.au

South Regional TAFE Disability Liaison Officer Albany campus – phone 6371 3741 or email: DisabilityServices@srtafe.wa.edu.au

South West VETLink

South West VETLink is a service that can help high school students and their families find out about pathways to further education and employment.

For further information, please contact VETLink Bunbury office: Phone 0409 200 702

NDIS and Further Education

The NDIS is responsible for supports to lessen the impact of your disability on activities that are not directly related to your education or training. These can include personal care and support, transport to and from the campus, assistive technology and equipment, and specialist supports for the transition from further education to employment.

The NDIS is not responsible for learning and support needs that primarily relate to further education and training success. Higher Education or Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers are required by law to provide support that is directly related to your child's studies. This can include learning assistance, building modifications, transport between education or training activities and general supports to transition from education to employment.

You can find more information here:

swanautism.org.au/ndis-funded-supports

You can find more information about the education standards that set out your rights here: swanautism.org.au/dda-edu-about

NDIS Pre-Planning Toolkit

This Pre-Planning Toolkit is for people with autism planning to enter Higher Education or Vocational Education and Training (VET). Your teenager's disability may mean they need extra support to complete their chosen course and to participate equally with other students. This booklet will help identify what supports your child may need, who is responsible for providing them and how you can access them:

swanautism.org.au/adcet-ndis-planning

For Further Information

NDIS

The NDIS website contains lots of information to help you no matter what stage you are at. There are booklets you can download, videos and Easy Read information. You can begin at this page:

swanautism.org.au/ndis

From here, you will find information and videos to explain each stage.

Planning Resources

NDIS

This NDIS page has booklets to help you understand the NDIS, develop some goals for your child's NDIS plan, get ready for a planning meeting and use NDIS plans and funds to find and purchase services and supports.

swanautism.org.au/ndis-participants

Autism Queensland

Autism Queensland has a Family Goal Setting Tool to help families identify and prioritise goals for their child as well as the family's needs for information, support, and ways of participating in their community. SWAN has copies of this resource at our office that families can borrow.

swanautism.org.au/autism-qld-family-goal-setting

Association for Children with a Disability

Association for Children with a Disability have a free downloadable pre-planning workbook to help you prepare for NDIS plan meetings.

swanautism.org.au/acd-ndis-planning-workbook

Developmental Disability WA (DDWA)

DDWA's 'Making Changes through Goal Setting', is a step-by-step workbook to guide you through a series of questions to help set goals for your child and create a road map to help your child achieve the goal.

swanautism.org.au/ddwa-goal-setting-booklet

Down Syndrome WA

Down Syndrome WA's pre-planning workbook is for people with any kind of disability and any age to prepare for NDIS plan meetings.

swanautism.org.au/down-syndrome-resources



Recreation

Everyone can benefit from taking part in leisure activities such as sport, hobbies, dance and other skills classes. For autistic children and teens, it is perhaps even more important to find ways they can take part in leisure activities to gain the physical, social, emotional, creative and intellectual benefits.

As a parent/carer, it can feel challenging when it comes to finding activities that suit your child's interests and that are welcoming and supportive. Here are some places to begin:

Local Community Directory

One of the best sources of information is your local Community Directory. You can find out about all kinds of services, facilities and groups in your local government area. You can use a search function to find up to date information on sporting clubs, hobby groups, music, dance and drama classes, games clubs, Scouts, play centres, outdoor play spaces, swimming pools, gyms and much more.

swanautism.org.au/my-community-directory

SWAN Services Directory

You can find information about sport and recreational activities and services on the SWAN website using the search function. You can also call or email SWAN to discuss ideas and get information and advice on what's available.

www.swanautism.org.au

Mental Health

There is a range of mental health services and support organisations, for children and adults, that you can access in the south west of WA. You can use the search function on the SWAN website to find a range of government and non-government services and private mental health practitioners.

www.swanautism.org.au

The Mental Health Commission also has a search engine to help you find services in your area. Please see: swanautism.org.au/my-services

Here is a handy list of some services in the south west:

South West Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) – Bunbury

CAMHS provides free mental health programs to infants, children and young people up to the age of 17.

WA Country Health Service

Mental Health Services

Phone(08) 9722 4300

Access time 8:30 AM to 4:00 PM Mon-Fri

Kids Helpline

Kids Helpline is a free, private, and confidential 24/7 phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25. Counselling from Kids Helpline is available by phone, Webchat and email. Parents can also assist kids to contact Kids Helpline. You can explain that your child is autistic, and that you are helping them to learn to use Kids Helpline.

Phone: 1800 551 800

swanautism.org.au/kids-helpline-kids

Kids Helpline – For parents

Kids Helpline also has a wealth of resources on their website for parents. The Kids Helpline website has information and advice on a wide range of topics to help parents support a child who is experiencing anxiety, bullying, exam stress, abuse, family breakdown and much more.

swanautism.org.au/kids-helpline-parents

Headspace

Headspace Bunbury and Busselton are free, confidential services that help young people aged 12 to 25 with mental health support from skilled social workers and psychologists.

Headspace Bunbury

8 Spencer Street

Bunbury WA 6230

Phone: (08) 6164 0680

Email: info@headspacebunbury.org.au

eHeadspace

eHeadspace provides free online support and counselling to young people aged 12 - 25 and their families and friends.

swanautism.org.au/headspace-support

RuralLink (WA after hours service)

Provides easy telephone access to experienced community mental health staff, with a focus on supporting people with mental health issues.

Hours: 4.30pm – 8:30am Monday to Friday and 24 hours Saturday, Sunday and public holidays. During business hours you will be connected to your local community mental health clinic. Phone: 1800 552 002

Beyondblue - 1300 224 636 or chat online at swanautism.org.au/beyond-blue

Lifeline - 13 11 14 or chat online at swanautism.org.au/lifeline

Suicide Call Back Service - 1300 659 467 or chat online at swanautism.org.au/suicide-call-back



Assistive Technology

Assistive technology (AT) includes all kinds of equipment and technology to support people with disabilities. Each child is different, but some of the kinds of AT a child who is autistic might need, could be a communication device (AAC/PODD), apps, or sensory equipment such as sensory clothing.

NDIS will fund some AT if it relates to a person's disability and is needed to help them in their daily lives.

swanautism.org.au/ndis-assistive-tech

Apps

Here are some links to lists of Apps for iPads and other devices that you may find useful to support your child's development.

AutismApps is an Autism Association of WA website. It provides comprehensive advice on complex communication, devices, and Apps that they have reviewed.

swanautism.org.au/autism-wa-apps

Indigo Australasia (formerly Independent Living Centre)

Indigo provides a range of services including assessments and advice on communication technologies and other kinds of AT including sensory equipment.

swanautism.org.au/indigo-comm-solutions

swanautism.org.au/indigo-assistive-tech

They also have a searchable online equipment database.

swanautism.org.au/indigo-equipment-database





Sensory equipment

SWAN has a list on its website of companies that offer sensory equipment and clothing, to access, see: www.swanautism.org.au

Inclusion

Developmental Disability WA (DDWA)

Choosing what Matters – Getting a Life...Not just Services, by Heather Simmons, is a handbook of information and ideas to help families think about what kind of life they want for their child.

swanautism.org.au/ddwa-choosing-what-matters

Planning Choices

This Handbook is designed for parents of children with disability who want to learn how to access an ordinary, typical life for their child. It looks at understanding your child's development and helps you plan and make choices with your child to support them to reach their potential.

swanautism.org.au/ddwa-choices

Thinking Ahead

This is a practical handbook with a wealth of knowledge and tips to help you advocate for your child at school.

swanautism.org.au/ddwa-thinking-ahead

Personal Learning Support Plans Used in Education

This booklet is about Personal Learning Support Plans; this is an umbrella term covering various kinds of plans your child may have at school. For example, an Individual Education Plan (IEP), Behaviour Support Plan, and Transition Plan.

swanautism.org.au/dept-education-personalised-learning

What is your child's challenging behaviour trying to tell you?

This introductory guide is for parents, family members and carers who are worried about their child's/family member's behaviour. Parents can feel under a lot of pressure to 'solve' behaviour problems and are naturally very worried about the best approach to take. There are often complex reasons behind a child's behaviour and it is rarely anyone's fault, rather it is difficult to interpret what their behaviour is trying to tell us.

swanautism.org.au/ddwa-behaviour

I am trying to tell you something

This resource is about understanding needs and why people with disability may respond with challenging behaviours.

swanautism.org.au/ddwa-trying-to-tell



Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA)

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) has produced a range of fact sheets on inclusion.

swanautism.org.au/cyda-fact-sheets

All Means All

All Means All is the Australian Alliance for Inclusive Education, working to implement an inclusive education system and remove the barriers that limit the rights of some students, including students with disabilities, to access full inclusive education in regular classrooms in Australian schools.

All Means All has produced an Inclusion Toolkit to guide parents in supporting their child's inclusive education journey. You can download it here:

swanautism.org.au/ama-for-parents

School Inclusion Parent Network (SIPN)

SIPN is a network of families supporting each other to navigate the school years and promoting inclusive education. SIPN has an active Facebook group that provides information, support, and connection.

swanautism.org.au/ama-sipn



Family Support

Siblings Australia

Siblings Australia works to improve the support available for siblings (brothers and sisters) of children and adults with chronic conditions including disability, chronic illness, and mental health issues. Their website contains information about sibling support – services, resources, research and policy for siblings, parents, workers, and researchers. Siblings Australia also runs workshops and has a Facebook page and a closed Facebook group.

swanautism.org.au/siblings-australia

Relationships WA

Relationships WA runs a free Family Mental Health Support Service called 4families that provides support for families and carers (including grandparents). 4families operates in areas across the southwest, linking families to a variety of services to reduce family stress and enable children and young people to reach their full potential.

swanautism.org.au/relationships-wa

Local Community Directory

One of the best sources of information for families is their local Community Directory. You can find out about all kinds of services, facilities, and groups in your local government area. For example, you can use a search function to find up to date information on playgrounds, playgroups, childcare centres, schools, parent groups, sporting clubs, counselling services and much more.

swanautism.org.au/my-community-directory

Contact List

Write down any useful contacts you may have e.g., GP, Therapist, School etc

Name	Phone	Email	What they do

Notes

