

GIVE US *a break*

WHAT DOES RESPITE CARE LOOK LIKE UNDER THE NDIS?

What is respite care?

Respite care refers to any activity or support that provides a carer with a break from their caring role, and provides a person receiving care with meaningful activity or time with someone else.

Why access respite care?

Caring for a friend or family member can be very rewarding. It can also be physically, mentally and emotionally draining. Respite care provides a break from the physical and emotional demands of caring. A break can also provide the carer with a chance to catch up on much-needed sleep and rest, spend time with other family members or attend to other activities. Respite, can contribute to a carer's capacity to continue to provide quality care.

For the person being cared for, respite care can provide an opportunity to experience new environments, access the community, make new social connections and develop new skills. All people living consistently with others can benefit from periods apart and interaction with other people.

The NDIS can fund support which can also provide the person with a break from their family/carer.

From the perspective of the whole family unit, respite can also help to maintain or improve wellbeing for other family members and strengthen or maintain relationships within and outside the family.

Respite care under the NDIS

The NDIS Plan is centred around the person with a disability, not the carer/other family members, so all supports are written in the plan in a way that relates to the person with disability. This is why there is no NDIS support called "Respite".

However, there are a range of support categories for people with disability which may give a 'respite' like effect for carers, either directly or indirectly which may create an opportunity for the carer to have a short break from their caring role. For example, a carer may take the person they care for to regular hydrotherapy or their social activity. The NDIS may provide a support worker to do this instead which then gives the carer a regular short break from their caring role.

What types of respite like care are available?

The main types of respite care are:

- **In-home** – support provided in the home. This might involve a paid worker doing an activity that interests the person receiving care at home. It might include socialising or helping the person learn a new skill. In-home respite can also be overnight (see below, 'overnight or weekend').
- **Overnight or weekend** – involves a paid worker providing care at home, or at a facility (see 'residential respite'). This can involve the paid worker being 'active' overnight (where the person receiving care needs care during the night, e.g. turning in bed) or sleepovers support (for a person who rarely needs care overnight).

This can also involve short stays with a host family. Some organisations run 'host programs' (such as Interchange), where you are matched with another family who provide occasional weekend respite care in their home.

- **Community access** – usually involves a paid worker going out with the person receiving care for an agreed period (a few hours, a day or an evening). They will do an activity of interest, socialise, or attend a group or class.
- **Centre-based day services** – day centre activities or outings for the person being cared for, often with other people with a disability. These activities are usually provided during business hours.
- **Residential Respite** – involves a short stay in a live-in care residence or centre. The stay could be for a night, weekend, several week-nights, a week or several weeks.

This was called Facility-Based Respite (FBR). Under the NDIS, this support is called Short-term Accommodation Assistance (STAA). Many non-government providers offer STAA. With some organisations, stays are arranged as needed, and with others regular stays are planned in advance.

- **Recreational Respite** – involves the person receiving care going to a camp or day activity, either with other people with a disability, or other people their age. These are often offered by non-government organisations, local councils and for-profit providers.
- **Emergency** – alternative supported accommodation or in-home support for the person being cared for in an emergency (when the carer is not in a position to provide care).
- **Informal** – informal respite care may also be organised with a family member or friend, which might be unpaid.

Will the NDIS fund respite?

Respite like options such as recreational respite, in-home respite and facility-based respite are still available to be included in NDIS plans. The National Disability Insurance Agency (who manage the NDIS) have recognised the importance of supporting carers to keep caring, and to maintain and sustain family and care relationships.

The NDIS will fund:

- a paid worker to attend a family holiday or outing, so the carer/family can focus on enjoying the outing or holiday or attend to other family members.
- supports aimed at increasing the sustainability of family caring arrangement, including personal care and domestic assistance related to the person's disability.

Including these supports in an NDIS plan

To access 'respite supports' under the NDIS, it is important that a person has at least one goal in their NDIS Plan that relates to these supports.

Respite like supports can fall under the title of 'Supports for Sustaining Informal Support'. The NDIS also uses the following terms or categories for supports that provide a 'respite effect':

- Assistance with daily life
- Transport
- Finding and keeping a job
- Improved learning
- Improved health and wellbeing
- Improved daily living skills
- Improved relationships
- Improved life choices
- Assistance with social and community participation
- Increased social and community participation
- Assistance with daily living at home, in the community, in education and at work.



TIP Also see additional flyer 'Tips for accessing respite under NDIS'

Residential respite

Residential respite is now called Short Term Accommodation Assistance (STAA). The NDIA determines the amount of overnight respite a person can access based on three levels. To determine which level a person comes under, the NDIA Planner considers the "level of disability", and the "intensity of support required from family or informal carers."

The levels are:

Level 1

Between 7 and 14 days per year where the family otherwise provides support most days.

This support is provided to the participant so that the family or informal carers can attend key activities relevant to other members of the family.

Level 2

Between 14 and 28 days per year where respite includes a strategy to build capabilities for future independence.

Level 3

28 days per year where the family provides support most days and informal support is at risk of not being able to be sustained because of severe behavioural issues or where the person requires intensive support.

There are certain circumstances where a higher level of support may be appropriate, such as where there are:

- unstable sleep patterns
- complex and high support needs
- significant behavioural challenges
- multiple children with a disability in the household
- other regular assistance required during the night.

You can't find an item listed under the NDIS specifically as 'respite', but you may find what you are looking for under other wording such as 'short term accommodation and assistance', 'assistance in a shared living arrangement', 'assistance with self-care activities', 'assistance to increase independence' or 'assistance to access the community'.

Providers of respite care

Many non-government not-for-profit organisations, for-profit organisations, local councils and community groups provide forms of support which support your family member and provide a break for carers. These supports range from residential overnight-stays to one-on-one supports in the family home to holiday programs.

You can find lists of organisations and options in your area through a search on your NDIS portal, on the NDIS website, your Local Area Coordinator or NDIS Planner, or through online forums such as the NDIS Carers Online Facebook group www.facebook.com/groups/NDISCarersOnline.

Source adapted from: *The Tipping Foundation, and Position paper: NDIS Reasonable and Necessary Supports – the Case for Respite, October 2018, Carers Australia, <http://www.carersaustralia.com.au/storage/carers-australia-position-paper-ndis-reasonable-and-necessary-supports-the-case-for-respite-1.pdf>*

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE OUR SERIES "GIVE US A BREAK" INFORMATION SHEETS

- Short term accommodation assistance (respite) under the NDIS
- Tips for accessing respite-style supports under the NDIS
- NDIS core supports that also support carers
- Opportunities for respite personal notes

www.everythingcarers.org.au/respite

