

THRIVING KIDS - A NEW NATIONAL PROGRAM



Australian Government

Department of Health,
Disability and Ageing

MANY CHILDREN IN KINSHIP CARE WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS PROGRAM

About Thriving Kids and Foundational Supports

Governments have committed to jointly contribute \$4 billion over 5 years to implement the first phase of Foundational Supports, known as 'Thriving Kids'.

This investment will support children aged 8 and under with developmental delay and/or autism with low to moderate support needs, and their families, carers and kin.¹ At least \$1.4 billion of the Australian Government's \$2 billion contribution will be provided as direct funding to states for Thriving Kids services.

Foundational Supports were a key recommendation of the Independent Review into the National Disability Insurance Scheme (the Review). Since the Review, governments have consistently heard children will be better supported to thrive through services that are easier to access in the locations they live, learn and play.

Supports will help give children the best start in life by ensuring those with additional developmental needs receive quality supports earlier in their developmental journey – when these supports can have a big impact.

Parents and families will be able to access information, advice and evidence-based child development supports delivered by allied health professionals, where these are needed to achieve good outcomes. Each child's needs and circumstances will guide decisions about which Thriving Kids services and supports are best suited for them and their family. Children and families will access supports matched to their needs.

NDIS access changes

The Australian Government and all state and territory governments have agreed in principle to change NDIS access arrangements to support the rollout of Thriving Kids.

Changes to NDIS access will commence from 1 January 2028 and will be limited to children aged 8 and under with developmental delay and/or autism with low to moderate support needs.

Children aged 8 and under enrolled in the NDIS prior to 1 January 2028 with developmental delay and/or autism with low to moderate support needs to be subject to reassessment under the eligibility criteria in place prior to 1 January 2028.

These changes will require amendments to the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* (Cth). The Australian Government will work closely with state and territory governments, people with disability and the disability sector to inform the design and implementation of these important reforms.

Timeline

It is expected the Thriving Kids program would rollout in phases. The first services are expected to be available from 1 July 2026 and would continue to ramp up over 12 months.

This will ensure national services are in place ahead of broader changes to NDIS access arrangements from mid-2027.

More information at:

https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/2026-02/thriving-kids-fact-sheet_0.pdf

¹ Children with permanent and significant disability as well as children aged 8 and under with developmental delay and/or autism who have substantially reduced functional capacity (high support needs) will remain eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), subject to usual arrangements.