

Making the Most of supports: Your Child's Voice Matters!

When you go to a therapy session or meeting for your child's NDIS plan, it is a great chance to help them. This guide will give you some tips on how to make sure the session is all about what your child needs and wants.

Every child has a way of communicating. They might use words, but they could also use hand movements, sounds, their face, visuals or a device. Their behaviour can also be a way of communicating what they are thinking or feeling. All of these things are important ways for them to express themselves.

Before the Session: Prepare for Success

Preparing is the best way to make sure your child gets what they need.

Talk to Your Child:

Ask what *they* want to work on.

You can ask things like "What do you want to learn?", "What makes you happy?", "What is something you find tricky?", "What do you want to be able to do?". Remember, your child might answer with words, gestures, signs, AAC, facial expressions, or behaviour.

What do *they* like/dislike?

Think and talk about their favourite toys or activities. What do they not like?

How do *they* like to communicate?

Think about their preferred way of communicating which may be words, gestures, pictures, sounds, devices, behaviour.

Review Goals (from their NDIS plan):

Read over goals in your child's NDIS plan and think about how they connect with what your child wants.

Gather Information:

Have school or medical reports ready. Write down anything new since the last meeting, like a new skill they have learned or a challenge they are having.

Prepare Your Questions:

- What do you want to learn from the therapist/provider?
- What concerns do you have?
- How will you know if the session was successful?

During the Session: Active Participation & Child-Centred Focus

Now it is time to put your plan into action and make sure your child is the focus of the meeting.

Introduce Your Child's Preferences:

At the beginning, you or your child can share what they want to work on. For example, you could say "Jaxson said he would really like to try riding his bike today."

You can also mention how they like to communicate or if they have any sensory preferences, like being bothered by loud noises.

Support Your Child's Communication:

Translate & Interpret:

If your child needs help expressing themselves, you can help by putting their gestures or sounds into words. For example, "It looks like you want the red one."

Give Time & Space:

Let your child have enough time to think about a question and respond.

Use Visuals Aids:

Use pictures or other tools if they help your child talk or understand.

Ask Open-Ended Questions (to your child and the provider):

Ask questions that can not be answered with just a 'yes' or 'no' like "How do you feel about that?" or "What do you want to do next?"

Observe and give Feedback:

Pay attention to your child:

Watch their body language and mood. Are they happy, frustrated, bored?



Speak Up:

If your child seems upset, gently let the therapist know. You could say "It looks like Chloe is finding that a bit hard right now. Could we try a different way?"

Share Your Knowledge:

You know your child best, so share what works for them and what does not.

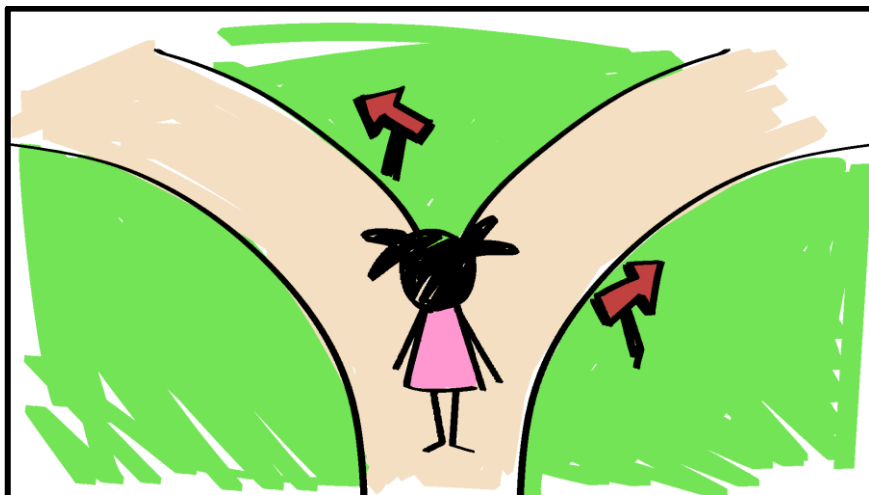
Check on Goals:

Make sure the session is helping your child and their goals. You can ask the therapist "How does this activity link to Seraf's goal of managing his emotions?"

Promote Choice and Control:

Offer Real Choices:

When you can, let your child choose between things like "Do you want to use the red ball or the blue ball?"



Respect Their "No":

If your child does not want to do something, listen to them and suggest something else.

Explain Why:

Help your child understand *why* they are doing an activity by connecting it to their goals. For example, "practicing getting on and off the bike will help you learn to ride it".

After the Session: Talk and Plan

Sometimes it is easier to think about how a session went and plan for the next one after it is over.

Talk with Your Child:

Ask them what they liked or did not like. You can say things like "What was your favourite part?" or "What was hard?"

Make sure to praise their effort! For example, "You did a great job today trying to climb slowly!"

Talk with the therapist or support worker:

Ask for ideas and activities that will support your child at home.

Make sure you feel comfortable with the strategies they used. It is a good idea to try them out together during session.

Discuss your child's progress and any changes needed for the next session.

Provide Feedback to the Provider:

It is okay to let the therapist know if you felt your child's needs were not fully met. For example, you could say "Yusef seemed overwhelmed today. Maybe we could start with a quieter activity next time?"

Also be sure to share positive feedback! For example, "Thomas used the communication board a lot today. Let's keep using it!"

By being involved and making sure your child's voice is heard, you can ensure that their NDIS support is a good fit for them and helps them work toward the life they want.

Funded by the NDIS Quality and
Safeguards Commission Grants Program



NDIS Quality
and Safeguards
Commission