

NDIS support for participants who are parents

- *An unknown number of participants are parents of dependent children in their care. Many lack informal support networks that are critical for sustaining their families. Mainstream agencies are failing to offer effective support to NDIS participants*
- *Many participants who are parents have their children removed before reasonable and necessary support is adjusted to take account of pregnancy and parenting roles*
- *How can the NDIS provide more effective support?*

The Agency needs to develop, operationalise and implement a consistent approach that meets NDIS obligations and ensures participants who are parents can fulfil their goals of being good parents

The NDIS has a clear responsibility to support participants with dependent children are in their care

- UNCRPD affirms the right of people with disability to parent.
- The NDIS has responsibilities to:
 - support participants overcome challenges arising from their functional impairment in relation to parenting
 - provide support to pursue goals, objectives and aspirations.
- NDIA principles of intervene early, build capacity, support access to mainstream services and build informal support have the capacity to determine reasonable and necessary support that is effective in enabling participants who are parents to care for their dependent children in line with the interface principles

There are a number of drivers the NDIA can address so that participants who are parents receive the support they need

- The Scheme lacks a formal consistent approach to:
 - Intervene early
 - Acknowledge the parenting role of participants
 - Negotiate with mainstream agencies to ensure they meet their responsibilities
 - Build informal support
- Participants who are parents need effective NDIS support to meet the requirements of child protection services and to secure access to mainstream family support services
- Mainstream systems are not providing the services to participants that are their responsibility under the Interface Principles.

So, the NDIS should take steps to ensure it delivers support to participants who are parents

1. Strengthen NDIS practice to
 - intervene early,
 - build capacity and
 - negotiate with mainstream services
2. Provide reasonable and necessary support that
 - is person-centred, family-focused
 - develops support networks around participants who are parents
3. Develops specialized Support Coordination roles
4. Make representations to ensure:
 - child protection agencies make an urgent referral to the NDIS for a plan review of participants who are notified
 - mainstream agencies make adjustments to fulfil their responsibilities to NDIS participants.