

Social Workers and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Information for planners, plan reviewers and local area coordinators - Updated 20/8/2025

Social Workers are allied health professionals who are skilled in professional assessment, therapeutic supports and specialist support coordination. Reach out to a Social Worker today.

Who are Social Workers?

Social Workers are university-qualified allied health professionals who play an important role in maintaining or maximising quality of life for individuals living with a disability, across the lifespan.

Social Workers are skilled at navigating the most complex and challenging presentations. This includes empowering participants to enhance their social functioning, building meaningful connections and improving the quality of their lives.

Experts at social functioning

Social Workers are experts in maintaining or improving participants' social functioning. This refers to an individual's desired capacity to interact, communicate, and form relationships with others, manage social roles and responsibilities, and engage in their community and daily life.

It encompasses the skills needed to navigate social situations, maintain personal relationships, and participate in activities that contribute to a sense of belonging and wellbeing.

How are Social Workers held accountable?

To work within the NDIS, Social Workers are required to be members of the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) and follow the AASW Code of Ethics, which stresses respect for dignity and professional excellence. They adhere to Practice Standards and compliance mechanisms that direct their practice and support.

Qualifications

Social Workers graduate from a university AASW accredited four-year Bachelor degree or two-year qualifying Master's degree in Social Work. This includes 1,000 hours of supervised placement experience.

Continuous professional development is required including clinical supervision and specialist skill building to ensure a high quality of services.

Many Social Workers hold additional training, credentials or post graduate qualifications to further inform their expertise. The AASW accredited disability social work (ADSW) credential signifies a minimum of two years full-time equivalent experience in a disability setting within the past five years, involves meeting disability specific practice criteria and maintaining yearly CPD records within a disability context.

How do Social Workers support participants?

Social Workers play an integral role in supporting participants through a variety of evidence-based therapies aimed at improving or maintaining social functioning. They employ disability-specific interventions to build essential skills in areas such as emotional resilience, relationships, and social and economic participation. Social Workers also assist participants in navigating services and systems, building individual capacity, and addressing practical barriers through problem-solving and goal-setting.

By improving the understanding and skills of a participant's carers and formal and informal support networks, Social Workers help to minimise barriers within the service system. They work within multidisciplinary teams to ensure that all services are integrated into a unified approach, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the support.

Specialist knowledge

Social Workers are skilled and trained to undertake assessments to inform their recommendations including, but not limited to:

- Psychosocial Assessments
- Functional Capacity Assessments
- Needs Assessments
- Risk Assessments
- Development Assessments
- Behaviour Assessments
- Support Assessments
- Social Functioning Assessments
- Independent Living Audits
- Environmental and Carer Assessments

Information snapshot

The information in this flyer will give you a snapshot to assist in planning discussions and how Social Workers may assist participants achieve their goals including:

- role of Social Workers
- how they support people
- tasks and approaches they use and the benefits of these
- where to go for further information.

Social Worker specific supports

Social Workers provide NDIS participants with Improved Daily Living Therapeutic Supports. The current fee schedule provides specific Social Worker items including:

- therapeutic supports
- intervention supports for early childhood

Social Worker items in current fee schedule

Specific items listed in the NDIS Pricing Arrangements & Price Limits 2025-26

Types	Item No	Item name/notes
Therapy Supports	15_621_0128_1_3	Assessment Recommendation Therapy or Training
Early Intervention Childhood Supports	15_621_0118_1_3	Early Childhood Intervention Professional

Other NDIS items which a Social Worker may use:

Social Workers may also provide the following NDIS supports:

- coordination of supports
- specialist positive behaviour supports
- employment related assessment, counselling and advice
- assistance in coordinating or managing life stages, transitions and supports (coordination of supports)
- assistance to access and maintain employment or higher education
- accommodation assistance or tenancy assistance
- participation in community, social and civic activities
- amongst others within their scope of practice.

Benefits of Social Work

- Maintain optimal social functioning
- Perform targeted assessments
- Investigate and address barriers to skill development
- Use therapies to manage emotions and build resilience
- Support multidisciplinary approaches
- Address deficiencies in systems
- Handle crises & resolve conflicts and barriers
- Provide training to providers
- Provide personalised therapeutic programs
- Strengthen family support systems
- Establish community connection
- Promote long-term family stability
- ...and much more.

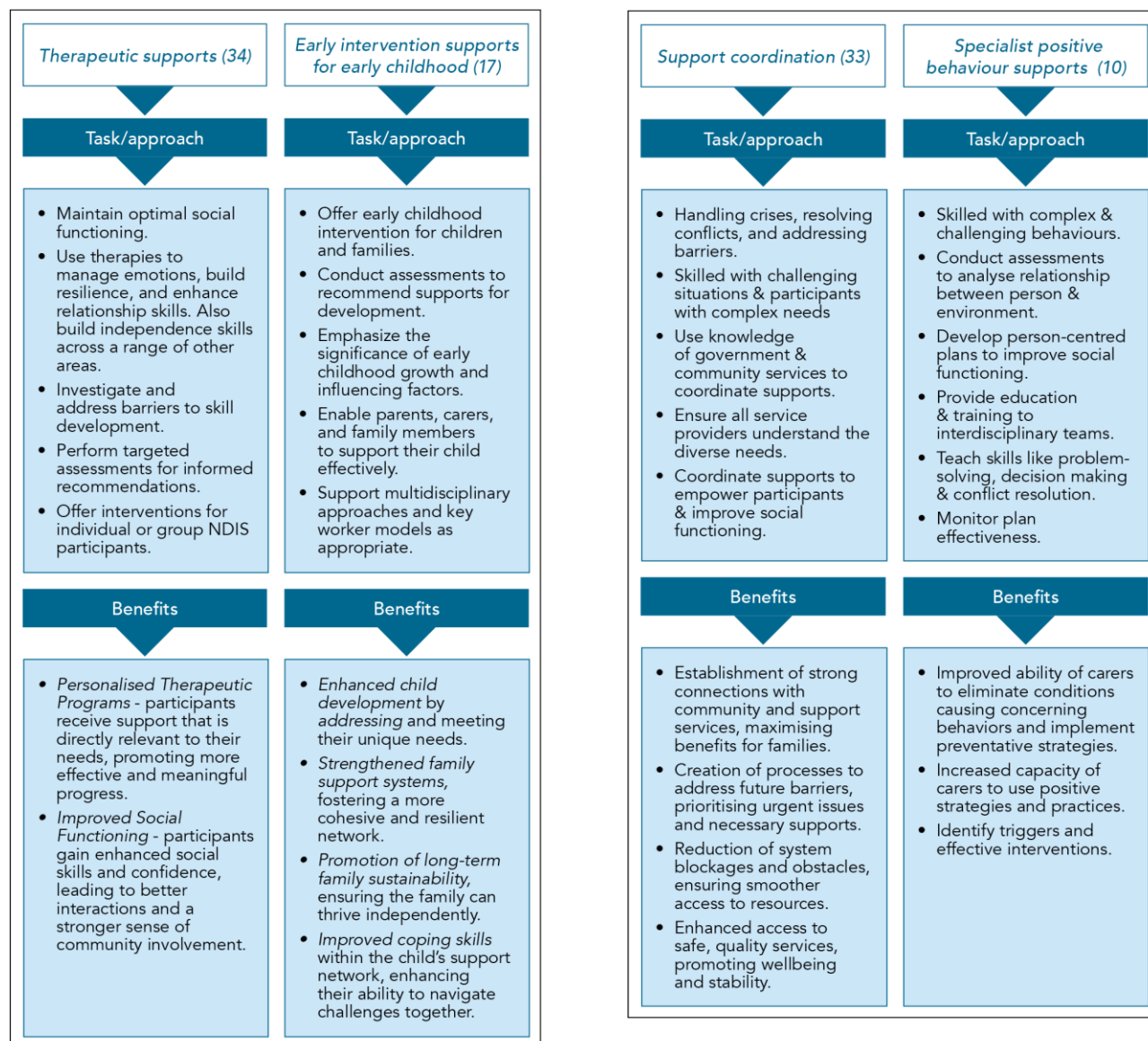
For benefits on specific supports, please refer to the next page.

FIND A SOCIAL WORKER

Locate social worker services across Australia quickly and easily with the Find a Social Worker tool.

Search by name, location, credential or services offered at: my.aasw.asn.au/s/find-a-social-worker

Benefits of Social Worker Support in NDIS



Refer to the [Australian Association of Social Workers](https://aasw.asn.au/) for more information.

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