

How to Apply for NDIS Funding:

Step 1:

First, you will need to apply for access to NDIS. There are two ways do this:

1. Phone NDIS on **1800 800 110** and ask to apply over the phone for access to NDIS on behalf of your teenager with ASD;

OR

2. Complete and return the NDIS “Access Request Form”, which you can obtain by either:
 - Downloading it from the NDIS website ([ndis.gov.au](https://www.ndis.gov.au)); or
 - Phoning NDIS and asking them to post the form to you.

You will be able to complete Section 1 of the form yourself, but you will need your teenager’s treating professional to complete Section 2 of the form.

Once completed, you will need to submit the form, and any supporting information requested in the form (such as proof of your teenager’s age and residence), to NDIS, by either:

- Emailing it to NAT@ndis.gov.au;

OR

- Posting it to **GPO Box 700, CANBERRA ACT 2601.**

I chose to apply over the phone. I was asked a number of questions, I think I was asked to email certain information to NDIS, and I was given an NDIS reference number for my daughter.

Step 2:

After you have applied for access to NDIS, ***within one to two weeks***, you should receive a letter from NDIS, asking you to provide evidence of your teenager's impairment from their treating doctor or specialist, and evidence of the impact of that impairment on your teenager's life. This letter should provide you with an "Access Request – Supporting Evidence Form".

If you do not receive the letter described above within one to two weeks of applying for access to NDIS, you should phone NDIS to chase it up.

You will need to respond to this letter within 28 days of the date of this letter.

There are two options for how to provide NDIS with the information requested in this letter:

1. Provide appropriate assessments or reports that you already have for your teenager with ASD*;

OR

2. Have a health or educational professional complete the "Access Request – Supporting Evidence Form", and provide this to NDIS.

***If you already have an ASD assessment report for your teenager, that should be all that you need to provide to NDIS (i.e., option 1, above). That is what I did. You should not need to complete and return the "Access Request – Supporting Evidence Form".**

Step 3:

After you provide your teenager's ASD assessment report to NDIS (or the completed "Access Request – Supporting Evidence Form"), ***within one to two weeks***, you should get another letter from NDIS advising whether your request for access to NDIS has been successful.

If your request has been successful, this letter should enclose a brochure with some basic information about getting ready for your first planning meeting to develop a first NDIS funding plan for your teenager with ASD/Aspergers (this is called a "First Plan").

This letter should also direct you to more detailed information on the NDIS website that can help you to prepare for your first NDIS funding planning meeting (which I'll call 'first planning meeting', for short).

If you do not receive the letter described above within one to two weeks of providing your teenager's ASD assessment report to NDIS, you should phone NDIS to chase it up.

Step 4:

At around the same time that you receive the letter from NDIS advising that your application for access to NDIS has been successful, NDIS should contact you to arrange a date and location for your first planning meeting. In my case, before I even received the letter, I received an SMS from NDIS advising me of the date and location of my first planning meeting.

When you are contacted by NDIS to arrange your first planning meeting, NDIS should direct you to their website, and in particular, to information that can help you to prepare for your first planning meeting. In my case, the SMS I received contained a link to the NDIS website, booklets and factsheets.

If NDIS does not contact you to arrange a date and location for your first planning meeting, within one week of you receiving the letter from NDIS advising that your application for access to NDIS has been successful, you should phone NDIS to chase this up.

These NDIS funding planning meetings are not necessarily conducted by NDIS directly. In some cases, they are conducted by NDIA Planners, but in other cases, they are conducted by NDIS Local Area Co-ordinator (LAC) Partners. LACs help people with disabilities to find and use services and supports. The first planning meeting for my daughter was conducted by Feros Care, which is one of a number of different NDIS LAC Partners.

Step 5:

Preparing for your first NDIS funding planning meeting:

In my opinion, this is the most important step. It is also the step that requires the most time and effort from you.

Because I had registered with Autism SA, I was able to ask them for “NDIS pre-planning support”. This consisted of a meeting over the phone with a consultant from Autism SA, who emailed to me three NDIS planning booklets (which I will refer to below), and went through them with me. Basically, the Autism SA consultant went through all of the information that I mention below, and more, and answered any questions I had. I found this to be very helpful.

However, not everyone will be eligible to register with Autism SA.

The sorts of things you will have to think about in preparation for your first planning meeting are:

- Your teenager’s strengths, interests, and challenges in daily activities. In relation to your teenager’s challenges/difficulties, you need to base this information on your teenager’s worst days;

- Your teenager’s current supports, both formal (i.e., paid therapists or support workers) and informal (i.e., help from family members or friends). If your teenager has only recently been diagnosed with ASD, they might not have many, or any, formal supports yet. Their main current support might be the support that you provide to them (i.e., informal support);
- Current and future goals for your teenager with ASD/Aspergers;
- What supports would be best for your teenager with ASD/Aspergers;
- How those supports would be best managed.

I strongly encourage you to prepare in advance, before you attend your first planning meeting. The NDIS website contains the relevant information, including booklets that have been designed for exactly this purpose. I strongly encourage you to access this information, and in particular these booklets, on the NDIS website, and use them to help you prepare for your first NDIS funding planning meeting.

To access this information, and these booklets:

- Go to the NDIS website home page. Up the top, you will see some headings. Click on the heading called “For Participants”. This will bring up a new page.
- On this new page you should see the following three tiles:
 - Booklet 1 – Understanding the NDIS;
 - Booklet 2 – Planning;
 - Booklet 3 – Using Your NDIS Plan.

The three booklets listed above are very useful. You can click on the three tiles listed above to download these three booklets.

- On the same page, below the tiles for the three booklets listed above, you should see a further three tiles. If you click on the tile called “Creating Your Plan”, it will bring up a further new page.

- On this further new page, you should see further tiles, such as, “Preparing for Your Planning Meeting” and “Ways to Manage Your Funding”. You can click on any of these tiles to bring up further useful information, which you could read.

I strongly recommend that you download the three booklets listed above, read them, and record the information that they ask for. It is not a requirement that you complete these booklets. However, the information that these booklets ask you to provide is the information that the NDIA Planner/LAC consultant will ask you to provide at your first planning meeting. This is the information that the NDIA Planner/LAC consultant will use to create the NDIS funding plan, which they will submit to the NDIA for approval.

The NDIA will determine the amount of funding that they will approve for your teenager based on this information. Therefore, it's important for you to provide as much relevant information to the NDIA Planner/LAC consultant as you can. If you complete the booklets and take them with you to your first planning meeting, you will be able to refer to them. This will make it a lot easier for you to answer the questions that the NDIA Planner/LAC consultant will ask you.

Although I strongly recommend that you work through the three booklets listed above, or at least read through them, if you really find this too difficult or overwhelming, then I would strongly recommend that, at the very least, you read through the information that I have provided under the heading below:

BRIEF EXAMPLES OF WHAT INFORMATION TO RECORD, AND WHAT TO CONSIDER, IN PREPARATION FOR YOUR FIRST NDIS FUNDING PLANNING MEETING:

Information to Record:

Briefly, the sorts of things you should think about and write down in preparation for your first planning meeting are, **what sorts of things does your teenager need to enable them to manage their:**

- **Difficulty with Change:**

For example, a psychologist who specialises in ASD/Aspergers could help your teenager to build flexibility to reduce rigidity of thinking, and cope with change in daily activity.

Therefore, at your first planning meeting, you would need to ask for NDIS funding to pay for psychology sessions for this purpose.

- **Sensory Needs:**

For example, a psychologist who specialises in ASD/Aspergers could help your teenager learn how to:

- Calm themselves when experiencing sensory overload, in order to enable them to carry out self-care activities, and take part in public/social activities;
- Identify the sensory difficulties they have with doing certain things, and help them to be able to find ways to do things, such as shopping, daily chores, attend/participate in school, and take part in social activities.

Therefore, at your first planning meeting, you would need to ask for NDIS funding to pay for psychology sessions for this purpose.

- **Eating Issues:**

For example, a psychologist who specialises in ASD/Aspergers, and/or a food/eating therapist, could help your teenager with their food/eating difficulties.

Therefore, at your first planning meeting, you would need to ask for NDIS funding to pay for psychology sessions, and/or sessions with a food/eating therapist, for this purpose.

- **Social and Community Participation:**

Ask your teenager about their interests, and activities that they would like to do. You might need to make some suggestions to your teenager. When doing so, think about what you already know about your teenager, and what sorts of activities they might enjoy, and/or benefit from. *(I have provided some suggestions of 'helpful activities' on pages 10-12 of this section of this website).*

At your first planning meeting, you could ask for NDIS funding to pay for the actual activities, and also funding to pay for a support worker to accompany your teenager to the activities.

- **Social Communication:**

For example, a psychologist who specialises in ASD/Aspergers could help your teenager to learn communication and interaction strategies, to increase their relationships with peers and family, and to be better able to communicate in a range of settings. Attending a social skills group, ideally one that is led by a psychologist who specialises in ASD/Aspergers, could further help your teenager to learn such strategies, and also to practice them.

Therefore, at your first planning meeting, you would need to ask for NDIS funding to pay for psychology sessions, and also funding to pay for your teenager to attend a social skills group, for this purpose.

- **Public Transport:**

For example, your teenager might benefit from having a support worker take them on public transport regularly, to help them get used to the sensory experience, and also to become familiar with the particular route they need to take to get to where they want to go. A support worker could also help your teenager to plan what bus or train they will need to catch, and when, and where, to get to where they want to

go. This could help your teenager work towards being able to use public transport by themselves, and therefore increase their social/community participation.

Therefore, at your first planning meeting, you would need to ask for NDIS funding to pay for a support worker for this purpose.

- **Emotional Issues:**

For example, a psychologist who specialises in ASD/Aspergers could help your teenager to develop strategies to decrease anxiety and regulate emotions in all life settings, and improve emotional regulation generally.

Therefore, at your first planning meeting, you would need to ask for NDIS funding to pay for psychology sessions for this purpose.

- **Learning:**

For example, a psychologist who specialises in ASD/Aspergers could help your teenager to identify information processing difficulties they have with doing certain things, and help them to be able to find ways to do things, such as shopping, daily chores, attending/participating in school, and taking part in social activities.

Further, some teenagers with ASD/Aspergers might need a 'special tutor' who is trained in ASD/Aspergers, to provide one-on-one teaching sessions to help break down and explain the homework from 'in class' lessons, to ensure that the teenager with ASD/Aspergers understands what they are being asked to do. If the teenager with ASD/Aspergers doesn't understand something from their 'in class' lessons, the tutor can explain/present the information in a way that the teenager with ASD/Aspergers is better able to understand.

If your teenager needs this sort of learning support, but their school cannot provide an appropriate person to provide this sort of support, then they might need a tutor outside of school. In the long term, this could help your teenager work towards obtaining a job that they like, and therefore increase their independence.

Therefore, at your first planning meeting, you would need to ask for NDIS funding to pay for psychology sessions, and/or sessions with a 'special tutor', for this purpose.

Some teenagers with ASD/Aspergers might benefit from occupational therapy, and/or speech therapy, or other types of support or therapy, to help them with the sorts of issues listed above. It will depend on your particular teenager with ASD/Aspergers.

There are all sorts of activities that could help your teenager with ASD/Aspergers to increase their social and community participation, and/or help them to learn, through engaging in activities that centre around their interests. There are many calming activities that could be helpful for your teenager's sensory needs, and could help your teenager to manage their emotions.

The specific activities really depend on your teenager, their interests, and what they would like to do. I have provided some suggestions of 'helpful activities' below, which I thought of for my daughter.

- **Some Suggestions of 'Helpful Activities':**
 - **Horse riding** - There are people/organisations that run horse riding activities for people with disabilities or mental health issues. If your teenager has an interest in animals (which a lot of teenagers with ASD/Aspergers do), this sort of activity could help them to learn more about an interest, increase their physical health, manage their emotions, and it is also a form of social/community participation.

- **Swimming** – I used to take my daughter to a local public swimming pool for casual swimming (not formal lessons). This was good exercise, which helped increase her physical health, manage her emotions, and it was also a form of social/community participation.
- **Art therapy** – If your teenager has an interest in Art, this sort of activity could help them to learn more about an interest, manage their emotions, and it is also a form of social/community participation.
- **Going to movies** – My daughter used to like me to take her to the movies. This was something she had an interest in and enjoyed, so it was good for managing her emotions, and it was also a form of social/community participation. Whilst I enjoyed taking my daughter to the movies, I would have liked for her to have been able to go to the movies without me sometimes, i.e., with a friend or support worker. I believe that sessions with a psychologist who specialised in ASD/Aspergers, and attending an appropriate social skills groups, could have helped her to build up to being able to do this, which would have been good for her independence.
- **Cooking** – At one point, my daughter showed an interest in cooking. I would help her with this at home. She went through a phase where she would cook some simple dishes independently. This helped her learn more about an interest, and was good for her physical health and food/eating issues. It also helped her work towards more independence in carrying out daily activities. I would have liked to have been able to encourage her to re-engage with cooking and to have been able to engage a support worker to come to the house to help her with cooking, perhaps once a week.
- **Going to shops** – My daughter used to come with me to do the weekly grocery shopping, and would also sometimes ask me to take her clothes shopping (she had an interest in fashion). These were ways for her to take part in carrying out daily activities, and were also a form of social/community participation. Whilst I enjoyed taking my daughter to the shops, I would have liked for her to have been able to go to the shops without me sometimes, i.e., with a friend or support worker. I believe that sessions with a psychologist who specialised in ASD/Aspergers, and attending an appropriate social skills groups, could have helped her to build up to being able to do this, which would have been good for her independence.

- **Information Technology** – My daughter spent a lot of time on her phone, iPad and laptop, and was quite adept at using these devices to undertake certain activities that she enjoyed, or found interesting. However, there were aspects of IT that she found difficult. I did talk to her about what sorts of activities she used her devices for, and about cyber safety, and I did try to help her when she was having difficulty with something. However, like a lot of parents, I am somewhat out of touch with the current teenage culture, and am not the most tech savvy. So I suspect that, sometimes, my daughter just didn't want to try to explain to me, or ask me for help with, these sorts of things. I would have liked to have been able to engage some sort of support worker to come to the house to support my daughter in being able to use information technology safely, for example, by helping her learn how to:

- Identify secure sites;
- Discern which information on the internet is genuine;
- Use her laptop safely and responsibly to do things such as online shopping;
- Set up a suitable social media account and use it safely to engage with family members, friends and interest groups. (As far as I am aware, my daughter was not interested in social media, and did not engage with any social media. Although I did not personally have a great desire for my daughter to engage with social media, in today's world, it is one of the main ways in which people communicate and connect with each other. With the appropriate guidance and support, I felt that it could be a form of social/community participation for my daughter).

This could have helped her work towards more independence in carrying out daily activities.

If there are any 'helpful activities' that your teenager would like to do, you could ask for NDIS funding to pay for the actual activities, and also funding to pay for a support worker to accompany your teenager to the activities.

The purpose of the NDIS is to help people with a disability to get the support they need, to:

1. Improve their independence;
2. Participate in the community; and
3. Reach their goals.

So when thinking about your teenager's needs, and what sorts of supports, therapies and activities you want to ask for NDIS funding to pay for, remember to try to relate everything to your teenager's ASD related needs, and how the funding you are requesting could help your teenager work towards the three objectives listed above.

It's a good idea to look through your teenager's ASD assessment report, and highlight anything in the report that supports what you want to ask for NDIS funding to pay for.

Remember to think about all the things that you, and/or other family members or friends, do for your teenager that most teenagers would be able to do on their own/for themselves. Think about how much time you spend doing these sorts of things for your teenager, and how this impacts your life. For example, does this affect your ability to work in a paid job? Does it affect your own ability to participate in social/community activities? Does it affect your own wellbeing? Think about whether you want and/or need to engage a support worker to do some of these things for/with your teenager.

When recording information in preparation for your first planning meeting, it's best to provide more information rather than less. It can be helpful to use dot points.

Information to Consider:

- **Different NDIS Budgets:**

Once the NDIS funding plan is approved, the funding will be allocated to different budgets.

It's a good idea to think about how the supports, therapies and activities that you want to ask for NDIS funding to pay for, will fit into the relevant budgets.

Support Budgets:

- Core Supports Budget:

This Budget is used for anything to do with assistance with daily living, and social and community participation, such as support workers, mentors, social skills groups, or 'helpful activities'. This Budget is flexible. The money allocated to this Budget can be switched between different categories in this Budget.

- Capacity Building Supports Budget:

This Budget is used for therapy, such as sessions with a psychologist, occupational therapist, speech pathologist, or food/eating therapist. This Budget is not flexible. Certain amounts of money will be allocated for certain categories. These amounts cannot be switched between different categories in this Budget.

- **Ways to Manage Your Funding:**

Before your first planning meeting, you should consider and decide how you want to manage the NDIS funds, once they've been approved. There are three options:

1. NDIA managed:

This means that, based on the approved NDIS funding plan, an NDIA manager will arrange support/therapy that they think is appropriate for your teenager. Your teenager with ASD/Aspergers (and any support person who accompanies them) will turn up for their support/therapy appointments, attend their sessions with their support workers/therapists, or attend their social skills group, etc, and then leave. You and your teenager won't see any invoices for these appointments, etc, as they'll go straight to NDIS. It should be very easy.

However, only NDIS registered providers of support/therapy can be used. This will limit your options for support/therapy for your teenager. It might be that the providers of support/therapy that you and/or your teenager feel will be the most suitable for your teenager's needs, are not NDIS registered providers. For a start, I know that the only clinic that I can personally recommend for psychology sessions for teenagers with ASD/Aspergers are not NDIS registered providers.

However, some people need, or prefer, the NDIA managed option, because they find it too difficult to deal with making decisions about which providers to seek support/therapy from, arranging the support/therapy, and managing the NDIS funds. It is a lot to deal with.

2. Plan managed:

This means that you will have a plan manager to manage the NDIS funds. If you choose the plan managed option, you will get a certain amount of funding with your teenager's NDIS funding plan for a plan manager, and NDIS can direct you to a plan manager.

Once you have a plan manager, you can discuss with them what sort of support/therapy you think your teenager needs, and what their NDIS funding plan covers. If there are certain types or providers of support/therapy that you and/or your teenager feel will be the most suitable for your teenager's needs, you will have to check with your plan manager first to see if this particular support/therapy is

covered by your teenager's NDIS funding plan. Then either you, or your plan manager can book it. Alternatively, you could ask the plan manager to find/recommend appropriate providers, based on what sort of support/therapy you think your teenager needs, discuss these with you, and book it for you.

You and your teenager won't see any invoices for these appointments, etc, as the providers will send the invoices to the plan manager, who will deal them.

Many people like the plan managed option, because it gives them the freedom to choose the providers of support/therapy that they and/or their teenagers feel will be the most suitable, whilst still having the support of the plan manager to provide advice and to manage the NDIS funds.

3. Self-managed:

This means that, based upon your teenager's approved NDIS funding plan, you will be responsible for finding appropriate providers of support/therapy that you and/or your teenager feel will be the most suitable for your teenager's needs, and for booking this support/therapy.

You will need to pay these providers up front yourself (usually on the day of the appointment), then request reimbursement from NDIS. NDIS will pay the reimbursement into your nominated bank account. It's a good idea to set up a separate bank account for this purpose.

In order to do this, you will need a MyGov account. You will be sent instructions from NDIS to set up an NDIS MyPlace portal, which you will need to link to your MyGov account. You will need to enter your nominated bank account details via the portal.

After your teenager attends an appointment for support/therapy, etc, and you receive an invoice, you will need to submit the payment request form via the MyPlace portal. You do not upload the invoice to NDIS. However, you will need to keep all invoices from providers (i.e., receipts of what you've paid), in case NDIS ever wants to check them.

OR you could ask the providers if they could provide you with an invoice on the day of treatment, but not require you to pay up front. Then you could send the invoice to NDIS, wait for NDIS to pay the amount of the invoice into your nominated bank account, then pay the provider. However, not all providers are willing to do this.

For some people, the self-managed option is too complicated, time consuming and stressful. However, if you want to do the self-managed option, the NDIA Planner/LAC consultant will talk you through how to do it, and answer any questions you might have, at either the first planning meeting, or the implementation meeting, and probably both. Further, the NDIS website contains lots of helpful information and guidance for people who choose this option.

To access this information:

- Go to the NDIS website home page. Under the heading “For Participants”, click on “Using your Plan”. This will bring up a new page.
- On this new page you should see a number of tiles. Click on the tile called “Self-Management” to bring up lots of helpful information.

If you choose either the plan managed option, or the self-managed option, you will need to keep an eye on how much of the NDIS funds you are using, and how much is left. If you use up all of your teenager’s NDIS funds without realising, then your teenager attends a further support/therapy appointment, you will have to pay the bill out of your own pocket.

I chose the self-managed option, because, before my daughter was finally diagnosed with ASD, for four years I had been pointed first in one direction, then another, as I sought professional help for my daughter, and had felt like I was beating my head against a brick wall without getting any clear answers, or treatment that really helped my daughter. This experience had made me extremely wary of taking my daughter to see yet another psychologist who was NOT suitable, i.e., someone who was NOT a specialist in

the most up-to-date knowledge or understanding of ASD/Aspergers, or someone who was simply going to treat my daughter for 'standard' anxiety and/or depression, in a standard way, which did not seem to help her much, and in some cases, seemed to make her feel worse.

Quite frankly, by that stage, I had come to the conclusion that most psychologists and psychiatrists don't actually have a clue when it comes to the most up-to-date knowledge or understanding of what I sometimes like to call Aspergers. So, since I felt that even most psychologists and psychiatrists didn't have a clue, I was not going to trust an administrative consultant to be able to understand my daughter's needs well enough to be able to find her the very particular sort of providers of support/therapy that she needed. Further, if and when I managed to find appropriate support/therapy for my daughter, I did not want to have to wait for the approval of a plan manager before I could book it. However, I have a friend who has been very happy with the plan managed option.

If you do use the three NDIS planning booklets that I've mentioned above (and I strongly recommend that you do), and if you want more detailed examples of what sorts of things to record in preparation for your first planning meeting, I have provided examples of the information that I recorded regarding my daughter, when I was working through the three booklets in preparation for my first planning meeting, under the section of my website called:

[More Detailed Examples of What to Record in Preparation for First NDIS Funding Planning Meeting](#)

Of course, all teenagers with ASD/Aspergers are different, but this will give you an idea of the sorts of things a teenager with what I sometimes like to call Aspergers might need, and what you might need to tell the NDIA Planner/LAC consultant at your first planning meeting.

Step 6:**First NDIS Funding Planning Meeting:**

Your first planning meeting should be scheduled for a date within one month after you receive the letter from NDIS advising that your request for access to NDIS has been successful.

If your first planning meeting is not scheduled within one month* after you receive the letter from NDIS advising that your request for access to NDIS has been successful, you should phone NDIS to chase this up.

*(*If you want to have your first planning meeting sooner than this, you should phone NDIS sooner, to chase this up. Personally, I needed a bit of time to prepare).*

You should take the following to your first planning meeting:

- Your teenager with ASD/Aspergers, if they are willing to come, and if you think they can cope with it. If not, you don't need to bring them.

My daughter did not want to come to the first planning meeting, and, to be honest, I felt that was for the best. At that time, I think it would have been too confronting, overwhelming, and distressing for her, because, at a planning meeting, you really need to be very blunt about what your teenager's difficulties are, and what they CAN'T do. In a way, you are highlighting how 'different' and 'disabled' they are. Given my daughter's fragile mental health at that time, and the fact that I don't think she had really come to terms with what her diagnosis really meant for her, I felt that hearing people talk about her in that way would be detrimental for her;

- Proof of your teenager's ID, and proof of your own ID;
- The three NDIS planning booklets, if you have used them, and/or any other notes you have prepared, as per step 5 above, so you can refer to them during the meeting;

- A copy of your teenager's ASD assessment report, if you have highlighted the relevant things that support what you want to ask for NDIS funding to pay for, so you can refer to it during the meeting (the NDIA Planner/LAC consultant should already have a copy of the report, but, of course, it won't have your highlighting on it).
- Any other reports that you feel will support what you want to ask for NDIS funding to pay for, on behalf of your teenager, if you have them;
- Any invoices or receipts for support/therapy that your teenager has already received in relation to their ASD needs, and that they want to continue with, and/or any quotes for support/therapy that your teenager wants to receive in relation to their ASD needs in the future, if you have them. This will support what you want to ask for NDIS funding to pay for, on behalf of your teenager. However, given this will be your first planning meeting, you might not have any of this sort of support/therapy in place yet, and you might not have particular providers of support/therapy in mind yet, so you might not have any of these sorts of invoices, receipts or quotes (I didn't);
- Your MyGov username and password, if you have a MyGov account, so that the NDIA Planner/LAC consultant can show you how to set up and access the NDIS MyPlace portal, because, once it is approved, you will be able to access the NDIS funding plan via the NDIS MyPlace portal (which is accessed via MyGov);
- Your bank account details, if you want to choose the self-managed option for managing the NDIS funds, once they are approved.

At your first NDIS funding planning meeting, you will meet with an NDIA Planner/LAC consultant, who will basically go through all of the information and questions contained in the three NDIS planning booklets that I have outlined in step 5 above. They will ask you a lot of questions, as they will be seeking a lot of information from you, based on these three booklets. That is why it is a good idea to plan ahead, so that you won't have to come up with information on the spot, off the top of your head. You will already have had a chance to think about what information you will need to provide, what questions you will need to ask, and what sorts of things you want to ask for NDIS funding to pay for. You will be prepared and know what to expect.

- When answering the NDIA Planner's/LAC consultant's questions, base your answers on your teenager's worst day scenarios. If they ask you a question like, "Can your teenager do XXX?" and you think your answer is, "Maybe/sometimes," don't say, "Maybe/sometimes." Just say, "No".
- Tell them if you've had to take time off work to support your teenager.

For what it's worth, at my first NDIS funding planning meeting, I found the LAC consultant at Ferros Care to be very nice and helpful.

From the information you provide at this meeting, the NDIA Planner/LAC consultant will develop a plan for NDIS funding for your teenager, to be sent to the NDIA for approval. Based on this plan, the NDIA will decide how much NDIS funding you will get for your teenager.

Step 7:

In the next couple of days after your planning meeting, the NDIA Planner/LAC consultant should send to the NDIA, the plan for NDIS funding for your teenager that they have created, based on the information that you have provided at your planning meeting.

Step 8:

Once it has been sent, it could take up to two months for the NDIA to approve the NDIS funding plan, and allocate NDIS funding for your teenager. Once approved, NDIS will post the approved NDIS funding plan to you, notify your NDIA Planner/LAC consultant, and email a copy of the plan to them.

However, after your NDIA Planner/LAC consultant sends the NDIS funding plan to the NDIA for approval, it is a good idea to follow up with NDIS direct, every week until you receive the approved NDIS funding plan.

Step 9:

As soon as your NDIA Planner/LAC consultant has received the approved NDIS funding plan, they should contact you to advise you that they have received it, and to set up an implementation meeting with you. The implementation meeting should be set within the next couple of days after your NDIA Planner/LAC consultant contacts you.

They should also advise you that you can now access the NDIS funding plan via the NDIS MyPlace portal, which is accessed via MyGov (**I provide some advice about accessing the NDIS funding plan via the NDIS MyPlace portal, at step 10 below, on pages 23-24*). If you are not confident to do so, you can wait for the implementation meeting, and your NDIA Planner/LAC consultant will show you how to access the NDIS funding plan via the NDIS MyPlace portal.

Step 10:**Implementation Meeting:**

At the implementation meeting, the NDIA Planner/LAC consultant will go through the following sorts of things with you:

- The approved NDIS funding plan will be for one year, two years, or three years, then it will be reviewed every one year, two years, or three years.

Therefore, before the end date of the NDIS funding plan, you will need to obtain progress reports from all of your teenager's support workers and therapists, so that you can provide these at the review meeting. It's best to ask your teenager's support workers and therapists for progress reports a couple of months before the date of the review meeting, as it might take them a while to prepare their reports.

- When you receive the approved NDIS funding plan, if you feel that the level of funding that has been allocated is not enough, you can dispute it, by requesting an internal review within three months of the date of the approved NDIS funding plan. You can ask your NDIA Planner/LAC consultant how to do this. (I believe you would have to go to your local NDIS office).

If you are not happy with the outcome of the internal review, you can seek an external review via the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). You can ask your NDIA Planner/LAC consultant how to do this.

- If you want you to continue to be able to act on behalf of your teenager with ASD/Aspergers in relation to their NDIS funding after they turn 18 (and if your teenager also wants this), you will need to apply to be your teenager's nominee. Ideally, you should do this before your teenager turns 18. Otherwise, once your teenager turns 18, the NDIS will start to communicate directly with your teenager. This could cause some teenagers with ASD/Aspergers to panic. You can ask your NDIA Planner/LAC consultant how to do this.

Some 18 year olds who have ASD/Aspergers might be capable of, and might want to, act on their own behalf in relation to their NDIS funding, but for many, this is not the case.

- If you have not already done so, at this meeting, the NDIA Planner/LAC consultant will help you to do the following:
 - Set up a MyGov account;
 - Set up an NDIS MyPlace portal and link it to your MyGov account (you will then access the NDIS MyPlace portal through myGov);
 - Show you how to access the approved NDIS funding plan via the NDIS MyPlace portal.

*You don't have to wait for the implementation meeting to do this. As soon as your NDIA Planner/LAC consultant has advised you that they have received the approved NDIS funding plan, as per step 9 above, you should be able to access the plan via the NDIS MyPlace portal, as outlined above, if you are confident to do so.

However, you will need an activation code. NDIS will post you a letter containing your activation code, but it might take a while to reach you (by the time I received the letter from NDIS containing my activation code, the activation code had actually expired). If you want to access the approved NDIS funding plan sooner, you will need to phone NDIS to ask for the activation code.

You will need to link the NDIS MyPlace portal to your MyGov account under your own name and date of birth. Once you are on your MyPlace portal, you should see a box up the top of the page that should give you the option of accessing MyPlace on behalf of your teenager. This is the option you will need to select. This should bring up a new page. On this new page, you should be able to access the approved NDIS funding plan.

- The NDIA Planner/LAC consultant will explain to you how to access, use, and manage your teenager's NDIS funding. This advice will vary, depending on what option you chose for managing your teenager's NDIS funding (i.e., NDIA managed, Plan managed or Self-managed). If you chose the Plan managed option, the NDIA Planner/LAC consultant can direct you to a plan manager.

If you choose the Self-managed option for managing your teenager's NDIS funding (as I did), do not hesitate to phone NDIS if you experience any IT glitches.

For example, when I tried to enter my nominated bank account details via the NDIS MyPlace portal, I found it quite confusing, and experienced a glitch. I think I had entered my bank account details whilst accessing the portal 'on behalf of my daughter', instead of myself. I phoned NDIS, and they explained how to correct the error. I had to go into my local NDIS office with my ID.