



NDIS Access Guide for PDA Adults

Navigating the NDIS with a PDA profile

Accessing the NDIS as an adult with PDA presents unique challenges. You may have been late identified, you may present in ways that are misread as "high functioning", and the standard NDIS application process is itself a significant demand. This guide is written specifically for you.

Am I Eligible?

To access the NDIS as an adult, you must be under 65, meet residency requirements, and have a permanent disability that significantly impacts your functional daily life. PDA is typically understood within the autism framework for NDIS purposes.

Important

Having a diagnosis of autism or PDA does not automatically guarantee NDIS access. You must show that your disability has a significant impact on your daily functioning. This is especially important if you have developed effective masking — the NDIS looks at your underlying functional capacity, not your public performance.

Unique Challenges for PDA Adults

- The application process itself is a major demand — long, complex, and bureaucratic
- You may present well in short interactions (with planners, assessors) but struggle significantly day-to-day
- Masking means your NDIS planner may not see the full picture of your functional needs
- You may have limited energy for advocacy in a system that requires persistent follow-up
- You may not have a support network to help navigate the process

Evidence You'll Need

- ■ Autism/PDA diagnosis report — ideally from a psychologist, psychiatrist, or paediatrician
- ■ OT assessment — particularly functional daily living and self-care
- ■ Psychological report — anxiety, regulation, mental health
- ■ Supporting statement from someone who knows you well (partner, family member)
- ■ Your own written statement about functional daily impact
- ■ Any employment records showing difficulties or accommodations

Writing Your Own Supporting Statement

Your own words are important. Describe your average day honestly — include the things that are hard, the things that take much more energy than they "should", and the things you cannot do at all. Be specific.



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Areas to cover

- Morning routine — getting up, hygiene, breakfast, getting out of the house
- Employment — can you work? Hours you can manage, accommodations you need, jobs lost
- Household management — cleaning, cooking, administration, appointments
- Social life — relationships, isolation, energy cost of social interaction
- Community access — can you go to shops, appointments, public spaces independently?
- Emotional regulation — meltdowns, shutdowns, anxiety management
- Sleep — quality, duration, the impact of poor sleep on next-day functioning

Getting Diagnosed as an Adult in Australia

If you don't yet have a formal diagnosis, you'll need one before applying to the NDIS. Adult autism assessment in Australia typically involves a psychologist or psychiatrist and takes 6-12 weeks. Some states have public assessment pathways — your GP can refer you.

Getting Support with the Application

- NDIS Local Area Coordinators (LACs) — free support to navigate the application
- Disability advocacy services — free, independent support with applications and reviews
- Autistic Peer Support groups — advice from others who have been through the process
- Carer Gateway — if you also have a carer role (1800 422 737)

You deserve support

The NDIS was designed to give people with disability the support they need to live a full life. As a PDA adult, that support matters. The process is hard — but so is getting through every day without it. You deserve to ask for what you need.