

MEDIA RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

1 October 2026

Thriving Kids and NDIS changes begin: families need a safety net

The Australian Autism Alliance says 1 October marks the start of a major transition for Autistic people and families, as Thriving Kids begins rolling out alongside significant NDIS funding changes. The test is whether the right support is actually there — and whether there is a safe pathway when it isn't.

“Today is the starting line, not the finished system. Children and families cannot be expected to move between systems without a safety net,” said Jenny Karavolos, Independent Co-Chair of the Australian Autism Alliance.

Thriving Kids is progressively rolling out for children aged eight and under with developmental delay and/or autism with low to moderate support needs. Importantly, **children's NDIS access does not change today**, with existing arrangements continuing until 1 January 2028.

The Australian Government's new **Thriving Kids Fact Sheet**, available through the Alliance website, is a useful starting point. It confirms general supports, such as information, advice and parenting supports, will begin rolling out from October, with targeted supports progressively available from 2027. But key details remain unresolved: governments are still defining **“low to moderate support needs”**, and what is available will vary between jurisdictions and locations.

“Families need to know what support is actually available, whether their child can access it and what happens if it isn't enough,” Ms Karavolos said.

“Families will understandably be reluctant to let go of supports that are working until they can see what will replace them. **Children should not become the shock absorbers while governments work out the systems around them.**”

NDIS funding changes also begin

From 1 October, new support determinations begin to apply. Funding allocations for **Social, Economic and Community Participation supports will be reduced by 50 per cent** and **Improved Daily Living Skills supports by 10 per cent.**

The reductions do not affect every participant today. They apply progressively as plans are created or reassessed, and later through plan renewals.

The Alliance recently addressed these changes through CYDA's **Making Sense of the NDIS Changes** webinar and has developed a practical toolkit to help participants and families prepare for and respond to the reforms.

Three different 90-day rules

The Alliance is also urging families not to confuse three separate provisions:

1. **Reassessments:** since 27 August 2026, the NDIA has up to **90 days** to decide certain unscheduled reassessment requests.
2. **High-support safeguard:** from 1 October 2026, eligible participants receiving 24-hour funded disability supports have a **90-day pathway** to seek a plan variation where the funding reductions leave insufficient funding to maintain those supports.
3. **Claims:** from **1 December 2026**, participants and plan managers will generally need to submit claims within **90 days** of a support being delivered.

These are separate provisions with different purposes and commencement dates.

The Alliance says the significance of 1 October is not simply that several reforms commence on the same date, but **what happens when those reforms meet in the life of an individual**.

“Is the support actually there? Can the person access it? Is it right for them? Who is accountable if it doesn’t work? And is there a safe pathway to the support they need?” Ms Karavolos said.

The Australian Autism Alliance will continue monitoring the rollout of Thriving Kids and the NDIS changes, including differences between states and territories and advocating for safe and effective implementation across Australia.

Systems That Work for Everyone. See the individual.

Resources:

Australian Government: [Thriving Kids Fact Sheet](#)

Australian Autism Alliance: [Practical NDIS Changes Toolkit](#)

About the Australian Autism Alliance: We are the national peak body furthering the rights and interests of Autistic people across the life span, their parents and carers, and the autism community in Australia. The members represent a cohesive national network of key organisations with a diverse focus on autism. For more information about Australian Autism Alliance go to: australianautismalliance.org.au and connect with us on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter.

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