

Accessing Short Term Accommodation Funding For Children

tip sheet

This guide is designed to help families talk about Short Term Accommodation (STA) at an NDIS planning meeting, plan review, or when asking for a change to a child's plan. It reflects NDIS information and operational guidelines available at July 2026 and should be used as a general guide only, as NDIS policies and guidance may change over time. If you need help applying this to your situation, please contact MDNSW or your support coordinator.

What is Short Term Accommodation?



STA, also referred to by the NDIS in some materials as Short Term Respite, allows children and their primary carers to have time apart while ensuring the child continues to receive disability-related support.

STA can include:

- Time away from primary carers with appropriate disability support, that benefits both the child and their family
- Overnight accommodation and support, for at least one night
- A meaningful break for families
- Use for up to 14 days at a time and usually up to 28 days per year

STA is not a holiday and is not about building skills for a child. Its main purpose is to help families continue caring in a sustainable way.



How to talk about STA in your planning meeting



The NDIS uses set guidelines when deciding on STA. The sections below reflect these guidelines and may help you organise your discussion.

1. The need for STA is related to disability support needs

STA is considered when a child's disability-related needs place a high level of demand on their family.

This may include:

- Daily care needs of more than six hours, beyond what is typical for the child's age.
- High intensity support needs (including complex bowel care or respiratory supports) or behaviours that require close supervision for safety.

The NDIS will also look at the family, including:

- Whether other members of the household have a major disability
- Whether carers have serious health concerns or reduced capacity to continue caring
- Risks associated with providing all support in the home
- Risk of the child entering out-of-home care
- Limited access to supports, such as in regional or rural areas
- Whether other supports have been funded or considered

The NDIS is clear that STA doesn't replace mainstream supports, such as vacation care and camp programs. Where mainstream supports have not been suitable, families can explain why STA is needed. For example, vacation care does not provide overnight care, or camps do not meet a child's support needs.

If you are specifically requesting funding for MDNSW's Summer Break program, you could describe it is an overnight stay program for children living with neuromuscular conditions. However, you typically do not need to specify what program or service provider you are requesting the support for.

2. STA helps to pursue goals

Families may find it helpful to include goals in their child's NDIS plan related to STA.

This may include goals like:

- Maintaining informal supports
- Helping the child continue living at home
- Supporting long-term family stability

3. STA helps children participate in the community

STA can help children stay socially connected and included.

This may include:

- Social and group activities
- Age-appropriate time away from home
- Support in a safe and structured environment

Time away from home, including sleepovers, is a normal part of growing up. Where this is difficult due to disability-related needs, STA can provide a supported option.

4. STA is value for money

STA can be a practical and cost-effective way to meet support needs.

Families may wish to compare the cost of overnight and daytime support workers across a 24-hour period versus the daily cost of STA. In many cases, STA is a more cost-effective way to meet support needs while also providing families with a genuine break.

5. STA is effective and beneficial for families

Caring can be physically and emotionally demanding, especially when care is needed overnight.

STA can help by providing:

- A meaningful break from caring responsibilities
- Time to rest and recover
- Reduced stress and burnout
- Greater ability to keep caring long-term

6. How much support families and other informal supports provide

The NDIS considers how much care is provided by families. Families may describe:

- Daily and overnight care they provide
- How long this level of care has been needed
- The impact on health, work and family life
- Whether there are any barriers to other family members providing care
- Any concerns with sustaining support arrangements over the long term

7. The support is an NDIS support

Families will want to show they understand that STA:

- Provides disability-related support while children and primary carers have time apart
- Is not general parenting, babysitting, or holiday care
- Is not a mainstream service

Families may also explain why other supports are not suitable, such as those not offering overnight care or not meeting disability-related needs.



[Download the full STA Operation Guidelines](#)

Need support?



If you are unsure how STR fits your family's situation, you can talk with MDNSW or your support coordinator.