

# Finding the right Support Workers for your child and family



Support Workers can be an important source of support for your child and for you as a family.

Support Workers can increase your child's independence by assisting with personal care, getting them out and about in the community and supporting your child to play and have fun. Support Workers are funded under the Core budget in your child's NDIS Plan.

## Think about what your child and family needs

Think about when your child needs the most extra support. Consider your family schedule as a whole to ensure your child with disability gets the supports they need during the busiest times.

What specific tasks does your child need help with? For example, personal care, assistance in the community or therapy support. Are you looking for community access and someone to get out and about with you or your child, or do you need in-home support?

## Getting Support Workers

There are three ways to find Support Workers for your child:

### 1. Service provider

There are many service providers who provide Support Workers.

If using a service provider check if you get a choice of Support Worker.

### 2. Online matching platform

Matching platforms are online agencies that will help you search for individual Support Workers.

Not all matching platforms are the same. For example: HireUp is a registered provider and when they employ the workers they undertake more rigorous checks and will follow up problems with support workers. Mable is more like a matching service. The Support Worker is a contractor and you need to follow up issues directly with the worker yourself.

### 3. Find your own Support Workers

Think about people you already know: friends of friends, people from your faith communities or a club you are involved in. Ask your child's therapist if they can suggest anyone.

Summarise what you are looking for in a short ad that explains what you want the Support Worker to do and include anything that is important to your child.

Share the ad with your networks but don't include any private information such as your address or personal details about your child. Make sure you include information about how people can apply, such as by phone, email or written application.

You can employ them through a matching platform. This means that the matching looks after the financial and legal employment responsibilities. Or you can employ the Support Worker yourself. If you directly employ Support Workers you are accountable for legal and regulatory responsibilities, such as taxation, superannuation, insurance and work health and safety.

## Getting the right people

Check that any potential Support Workers have:

- Working with Children Check
- NDIS Worker Security Check
- First Aid Certificate if needed
- Victorian Disability Worker Registration

Then make a time to meet in person. For a first meeting you could meet in a library or café rather than in your home. Prepare questions that will help you find out more about the person:

- What training do you have?
- What work have you done before?
- Tell me about how you interact with children?
- What do your friends like about you?
- Have you had experience of (explain a bit about your child's support needs)?
- Are you experienced in providing personal care?
- What would you do if (give an example of a situation)?
- How do you maintain boundaries with children?
- How would you want us to communicate?
- Are you okay with my pet cat/dog/bird in the house?

Call at least two referees. Let the applicants know the outcome of your decision.

## Things to consider

It's rare that any one Support Worker will have all of your desired qualities. Consider taking on two or three workers. This will help ensure you have people to cover times of illness or holidays. Your child's Support Workers may not only work with your child and family. Keep this in mind and try to book Support Workers for regular shifts. It's a good idea to check cancellation and replacement policies.

## Useful links

NDIS Self-management

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/using-your-plan/self-management>

Disability Worker Regulation Scheme

<https://www.vdwc.vic.gov.au/>

## Related topics

Finding a therapist

<https://www.acd.org.au/finding-a-therapist/>

Assistive Technology for your child

<https://www.acd.org.au/assistive-technology-for-your-child/>