

Assistive Technology

What is it?

The NDIS can fund what it calls 'assistive technology' (AT). Depending on the supports you need, it can be anything from home and car modifications, wheelchairs, and talking kitchen appliances to an app to remind you when to do daily tasks.

What funding can I get?

The NDIS will only approve some AT if you've had an OT assessment and you've got a quote for how much it will cost. But you can also ask for some funds to spend on what the NDIS calls 'low risk AT'. This means you aren't going to be put at risk and you don't need a professional recommendation; you can just go and buy it if it's something that will help meet your goals.

The funds are in your Core budget under 'consumables', and it's usually around \$1000. You self-manage this funding so that means you can buy it anywhere. You can buy from specialist suppliers, or look for the best price for items online. You still need to keep your invoices/receipts so you can claim from the NDIS. You may also have some flexibility to use other Core funding for AT, but again, you have to self-manage and you do need to be very confident the item will help you to meet your goals.

What can I buy?

Not sure what you'd use this funding for? Check out some of the following providers, but also look at Pinterest for ideas. And remember, you may spot something at a specialist disability supplier, but you might be able to get the same or a very similar item much cheaper on ebay or similar online stores. So shop around to make the most of the funds.

What kinds of AT might a person with Down syndrome need?

Every person with Down syndrome is different, and their equipment needs will vary. Some of the reasons why people with Down syndrome may need AT include:

- low vision and/or hearing
- poor muscle tone, low strength
- short stature
- reduced short term memory, affecting learning and organisational skills
- health issues
- ageing and Alzheimer's

Here are some examples of "Low Risk AT" that people with Down syndrome may want to use their NDIS AT funds for to help them with their NDIS goals such as developing skills, independent living, taking part in community activities and so on:

Eating and Drinking

Large handled cutlery for people with low muscle tone
Plates and bowls with suction bottoms and high sides
Bright coloured knives to help person with low vision.
Visual cookbook
Self-tipping kettle

One Touch battery operated can, jar and bottle openers

Jarkey screw top opener

Non-slip mats for kitchen bench

Mandolin slicer

Food mill for mashing food

House and garden

Stick vacuum cleaner for person with low strength

Key turner and door handle grip covers to help open doors

Tap covers to help turn taps

Retractable hose reel

Bed shaker smoke alarm

Lycra bed sheet – helps with anxiety

Zip sheets – keeps the top sheet in place for restless sleepers <https://kidszip sheets.com.au>

Brolly sheets bedding or similar

Family toilet seat – combines small and large seats

Kickstools and folding steps eg Baily Handistep to help reach high shelves

Paying for a second council bin for incontinence products

Night light

Timers and Reminders

Shower timers – to remind someone when to get out of the shower. You can get VERY cheap traditional egg timers with suction caps to stick to the tiles or shower screen (ebay and similar) or buy a waterproof electronic digital timer.

Time timer Plus

Apps to set reminders to do tasks, to go to the toilet etc

iWatch or other watch eg Watchminder (which vibrates) to help a person with intellectual disability be organised, take medications etc

Vibro watches eg Malem or Wobl watch- <http://woblwatch.com> - good for toilet reminders

Nut Tag bluetooth tracker for wallet, keys, bag etc

Talking clock

Large digital calendar clock

Personal Care

ModiBodi underwear – <https://www.modibodi.com/product-category/underpants/> great for leaky bladders and periods.

jettProof clothing – sensory clothing for all ages <https://www.jettproof.com.au>

Elastic shoelaces, shoe lace holders to keep laces tied all day eg from Athlete's Foot

Electric toothbrush with timer

Autobrush – hands free toothbrushing

<https://www.autobrush.com.au/collections/automatic-toothbrush>

Shower sandal for easier foot washing in the shower

Recreation

Swim Fin back float for extra floatation support

Hydrotherapy exercise equipment

Conni swim shorts <https://shop.conni.com.au/conni-containment-swim-shorts> (also have bedding and undies)

Communication & IT

Magnetic charging cables to help connect charger to phone and other devices
Noise cancelling headphones for loud environments
Video monitoring system for home security
GPS tracking on watch for travel training safety
Google Home or Amazon *Ecco*
Laminating supplies
Pencil grips

Apps such as:

Show Me Images – PECS style icons to make visual schedules
Book Creator – for social stories
Pictello
Proloquo2go communication app
Trello – for support staff communication

Remember, these are just examples. There are lots of different brands and suppliers for some of these items. Sometimes though, it's good to go with a recommended brand to be sure of quality. We've included some links, but that doesn't necessarily mean we recommend them. Window shop online, and shop around for the best prices. Ask in your peer support network and on social media what other people have used and what they think about certain products.

Remember to keep your receipts to claim back from NDIS.

And, if you find a product that works well, please share the info with others, such as in the NDIS & Me Facebook group.

Specialist Suppliers

There are many specialist suppliers. Here are some that are worth checking out for ideas:

Independent Living Centre

You can find Independent Living Centres in most states. They can help with assessments for AT, but they also have a great online National Equipment Database (NED). You can easily browse NED by topic to see what's available, information about the product and where to buy it. (Independent Living Centres don't make or sell equipment themselves). There are thousands of products listed under topics such as Communication, Bathing, showering and toileting, Aids for vision and hearing, Eating and drinking, Personal care and dressing, Computer access, Safety and health, recreation and leisure and many others.

https://ilcaustralia.org.au/search_category_paths

Visability

Visability has an online shop where you can purchase a wide range of products. While many are designed for people who are blind or who have low vision, many products could be useful for other people. Visability also has an actual shop at their HQ in Victoria Park in WA,

where you can see some of their products. You can search their online shop by category, and find all kinds of aids and equipment to help with daily living and technology. Examples are food preparation, organising and labelling, personal care and ID, and telling the time.

<http://www.visibilityshop.com.au>

The Therapy Store

Education and therapy equipment for people of all ages and abilities. There are hundreds of items in a range of categories.

<http://www.thetherapystore.com.au/shop-by-category/>

Brolly Sheets

This online shop has a wide range of products including bedding, clothing and toilet training aids, to help manage incontinence in people of all ages.

<https://www.brollysheets.com.au>

Dementia Australia Sensory Store

While this supplier has a focus on equipment for people with dementia, a lot of the items would be useful for other people with sensory issues or who need a bit of help to remember things. There are puzzles, fidget toys, large print calendars, talking photo albums and meditation CDs.

<https://thesensorystore.com.au>

Thank you to The Growing Space Facebook Group and NDIS & Me Facebook Group members for many of the ideas and product recommendations in this info sheet.