



Thriving Kids in Western Australia (WA)

Frequently Asked Questions

What will Thriving Kids look like in WA?

In WA, Thriving Kids will be a new support system for children with disability, their families, carers and kin and will provide early supports through local, community-based services that help families access information, build connections, strengthen parenting confidence, and support children's development.

The program represents a shift towards support that's easier to reach, community-based and built around the family.

Thriving Kids will be guided by early childhood intervention best practice which emphasises family-centred approaches. Supports will include:

- information, advice and navigation so that families and caregivers have assistance with accessing information and navigating across service systems
- parent/carer and kin support programs, such as playgroups, peer supports and community groups to build on family strengths, support child development and participation, and connect with others
- targeted, time-limited therapeutic supports in groups and on an individual family basis for children, aimed at empowering families with strategies to apply at home and in other settings.

Thriving Kids supports are designed to be time limited as family capacity builds and families won't need a diagnosis to get help. Many supports will be accessible through self-referral or familiar referral pathways.

Thriving Kids will be primarily delivered by the WA Government, commissioned through the Department of Communities.

Where will Thriving Kids be provided?

Thriving Kids will be delivered across WA in a range of local, trusted settings that are easy to access, which may include:

- community centres, hubs and other settings such as libraries
- some education settings, for example, Child and Parent Centres
- in the home, including using digital and hybrid delivery models.

Thriving Kids cannot work in isolation. Support will complement, not duplicate or replace, mainstream support for children provided through other government services, programs and initiatives.

When will Thriving Kids be available to children and families?

Like other states, Western Australia is implementing Thriving Kids in a phased approach. Services will be progressively introduced between 1 October 2026 and January 2028.

The first phase of implementation will be a transitional phase, to try, test and learn what works best for families in WA, to help shape the design and commissioning of further Thriving Kids services in WA.

How will people in regional and remote areas get access to Thriving Kids?

A Thriving Kids Service Principle is to ensure children and families in regional, rural and remote areas can access flexible and effective supports.

We're committed to designing supports that reflect the unique needs, strengths and circumstances of communities across the State, while building on existing local services and networks.

WA's approach to Thriving Kids has been informed by ongoing engagement with regional service providers, families and carers to understand what works in non-metropolitan areas.

Consultation with families, children, communities and sectors will continue over the coming months, including in Northam, Kalgoorlie, Albany and Karratha.

The delivery of Thriving Kids in regional, rural and remote areas across Australia, including challenges related to thin markets, will be considered as part of an independent review under the National Agreement for Foundational Supports.

How will Thriving Kids ensure that children get the required supports?

The Independent Review of the NDIS found that many children and families face challenges accessing the right support at the right time. In particular, the need for a diagnosis can delay access to help, and support systems have often focused more on individual services than building family capability and child development.

Thriving Kids is being designed around evidence that early support leads to better outcomes for children and families, including:

- identifying developmental concerns early
- providing information, advice and navigation support without the need for a formal diagnosis
- working in partnership with families to build on strengths and address areas where additional support is needed
- delivering supports in community settings that are accessible, familiar and trusted by families.

How will Thriving Kids and the NDIS work together?

Thriving Kids will start to progressively roll out in WA between 1 October this year to 1 January 2028.

Up to 1 January 2028, families and children can still seek to join the NDIS and access supports through the scheme.

Children who access the NDIS prior to 1 January 2028 will remain “grandfathered” in the scheme, subject to normal scheme reassessments.

Children of all ages with higher level needs, or with a permanent and significant disability will still be able to access supports through the NDIS after 1 January 2028.

Thriving Kids and the NDIS will need to work closely together to make sure children and their families receive connected supports.

What does ‘low to moderate support needs’ mean and how will eligibility work?

Thriving Kids is for children with developmental delay and/or autism with low to moderate support needs.

This is intentionally broad in its language because families do not need a diagnosis to access supports.

A definition of low to moderate needs is subject to further design work between the Commonwealth and states and territories.

We will share more detail about this as it becomes available.

How will Aboriginal-led delivery be supported?

Investing in Aboriginal-led Thriving Kids delivery is a dedicated investment stream in WA. This includes Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and Aboriginal Medical Services.

We’re working in partnership with the Aboriginal Health Council of WA and the Council of Aboriginal Services WA about how Thriving Kids will be rolled out to support Aboriginal children and their families.

This partnership will guide appropriate commissioning and procurement of expert Aboriginal community-controlled service delivery to Aboriginal children and families.

The lead up to January 2028 will see full ramp-up of culturally appropriate services, including in regional areas, complementing Commonwealth First Nations sector strengthening initiatives.

Aboriginal-led organisations are encouraged to apply for all open and competitive processes.

How will the consultation with families and the service sector inform the model?

In June 2026, the Department of Communities led consultation and engagement with more than 250 stakeholders, including people with lived experience, families, service sector and advocacy organisations, who contributed views on service design, commissioning, workforce requirements and implementation.

Key findings:

- There is widespread support for the policy intent and overall direction of Thriving Kids.
- Accessibility will be impacted by how services are delivered as well as what services are commissioned.
- The provider market demonstrates substantial willingness to deliver Thriving Kids.

- Implementation readiness is as important as service model design, given workforce, capability and infrastructure constraints.

Insights from parents reflect a need for flexibility in how and where supports are offered, the value of peer support and importance of embedding lived experience, and the need for further training for workers in mainstream services to support children with developmental delay.

Subject matter experts in Early Childhood Intervention, Paediatrics and Autism research have provided advice about implementation planning, design and outcomes, which has led to refinement of WA's approach. This will be ongoing as the program evolves.

How will Thriving Kids take into account workforce challenges?

The Commonwealth Government has committed to initiatives that support the capacity and capability of the Thriving Kids workforce across Australia.

Work is continuing with the Commonwealth Government to understand the focus of its workforce investment, and how we can make sure we have a joint approach.

The Commonwealth's focus includes workforce capability uplift opportunities for primary care/health, early childhood education and care and schools, and also includes an investment in embedding the new National Best Practice Framework for Early Childhood Intervention.

WA will undertake further work with government and relevant sector stakeholders throughout 2026 to develop workforce strategies to support Thriving Kids implementation in WA.

What opportunities will there be for the sector to deliver Thriving Kids services?

Funding for the delivery of services will be established through collaborative ways of commissioning, including through partnerships and consortia.

This will be different to a NDIS individualised funding approach.

The initial phase from 1 October 2026 will use existing community-based providers with expertise and infrastructure that can be scaled up quickly. Community-based partnerships and collaborative approaches will be given preference.

Grant funding of up to \$52 million is available for community-led initiatives to strengthen support for Western Australian children and families. The grants will be awarded through competitive applications and direct negotiations with a small number of providers to enable early mobilisation of some services.

Further commissioning opportunities for the sector will become available for providers as the program grows towards full implementation from 1 January 2028.

Organisations can register with [Tenders WA](#) and [SmartyGrants](#) to ensure they are prepared to respond to future procurement requests.

Opportunities will also be communicated through the [Thriving Kids website](#).