

# Nine Examples of Great NDIS Goals for Your Child

A guide to making NDIS goal-setting easy through using examples

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Nobody knows your children better than you do. You understand their struggles, and intuitively know what they need to develop and thrive. But sometimes this intuition and intimate understanding of our children also makes it difficult to communicate in a way that helps therapists and funders understand our children's needs. This guide provides some examples of actual NDIS goals to inspire you to find the right ones for your child, and why we think each one is a great goal. One disclaimer: this isn't to provide you with a goal list for all type of needs, but are focussed more on the type of difficulties we help children and their families overcome at Foundations for Growth such as difficulty interacting with others, managing emotions, and gross and fine motor skills.

## A Note on Goal Setting

There are many different ways of writing therapy goals for children. One of the ways that is becoming more common is writing goals from the viewpoint of the child or the family. After all, it's not that important for a child and their family to be able to "Stand on one leg for 5 seconds", but to the child it might mean the world to "Be able to kick a ball to my friends without falling over". They are the same thing, but the second one puts the child and their needs at the centre. Here are some examples that we have seen and love...

### Goal 1: I would like to have more confidence to try new things

During this plan I want: To be able to go and play in new locations such as playgrounds, try new activities and go to people's houses to visit without feeling as much anxiety. To be more involved in activities and to enjoy what I am doing without becoming withdrawn, angry or overwhelmed.

Why we love this goal: Firstly, it's set in the positive. We are hearing what the child wants, not what they don't. It also puts it in the context of something very important to the child – going to someone else's house and enjoying it.

### Goal 2: I would like to develop my friendships

During this plan I want: To have friends and for people to like me and want to play with me. To be forming friendships and maintaining these friendships. To be invited for play dates and to play with other children. To be included in play and activities with my peers at recess and lunch. To be more flexible around rules and understand that it is ok to change the rules of games sometimes. To play nicely with others without getting angry and without hurting or spitting at them. To be involved in group activities and to be cooperating with the tasks. To have a greater understanding of what are appropriate social behaviours and what are not.

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Why we love this goal: As adults we know that getting on with others is an important skill to develop as we grow up. This goal puts it in a way that the child also sees some immediate benefit.

### Goal 3: I would like to be able to play safely in my house and in my yard

During this plan I want: To have a greater understanding of safety and road awareness. To understand what the risks are to me if I run into the road and to understand about the safety needs of my siblings and the consequences of leaving doors open.

Why we love this goal: We think it is great to target safety awareness in your goals when it is necessary. Again, it is not generic like “Improve safety awareness”, but talks about what it means in the context of the child and family. After the plan has been implemented, you will be able to consider whether the actions taken have in fact enabled the child to be able to play in their yard safely.

### Goal 4: I would like to be able to play sports like my peers

During this plan I want: To be joining in with after school sports. To increase motor planning, coordination and muscle tone. To reduce anxiety and to stay calm when carrying out these activities. To be more flexible about rules and to not be seeing everything as black and white.

Why we love this goal: Often, goals that focus on only a couple of things that make it difficult for the child are better. But including a bit of a stretch goal like this, where there are so many things to develop can show significant and relevant progress. For this child, it would show an improvement in motor skills, social interaction, and controlling anxiety.

### Goal 5: I want to be able to write better so others can read it

During this plan I want: To have increased hand strength and finger control. To develop hand writing skills and skills at building Lego and to be able to manage my buttons, laces and zips when I get dressed. To be more independent in my eating and gain more control when eating with a spoon and fork.

Why we love this goal: Again, this is just not focussed on the “what” but also the “why”. After all, the “why” is the driving force behind making every change, so make sure to include it in your goal setting.

### Goal 6: I want to be able to talk to people and have them understand me

During this plan I want: To be speaking clearly and pronouncing my words correctly. For others to be able to understand me without needing me to repeat myself.

Why we love this goal: This gets straight to the reason why communication might be important to the child...so that other people can understand me and my voice can be heard...important for all our children.



### **Goal 7: I want to be able to be organised so I feel calmer and able to have a good day**

During this plan I want: To have a system that is working for me. To be less reliant on my parents for organising myself for the day ahead. To have the skills and motivation to be able to complete the tasks required to get to the level of organisation where I feel calm. To be able to follow instructions.

Why we love this goal: This goal delves a little bit deeper to what the child and family actually needs to be working on to get the desired result. For this child, meltdowns occur when they are unable to find things easily. And they are unable to find things easily because they find it difficult to organise things like their bedroom. And they find it hard to organise their bedroom because they don't have a system to create some order. So instead of setting a goal like "I want to stay calm when cleaning my room" it is actually looking at all the steps leading to a meltdown at cleaning time and finding the very initial thing that sets the child down the path of becoming frustrated then having a meltdown.

### **Goal 8: I want to be able to move from one activity to another without feeling overwhelmed**

During this plan I want: To move from one task to the next willingly and happily. To accept when it is time to move on. To be able to stop an activity without having a melt-down.

Why we love this goal: This gets back to "looking backwards from an unwanted behaviour" to find the true cause. If children have a meltdown it's not a random occurrence, there is usually a chain of events that lead to it. One common unseen reason is the anxiety that builds from a range of occurrences, with a common one being dealing with transitions between activities. Build the child's abilities to deal with change, anxiety goes down, meltdowns reduce.

### **Goal 9: I want to be able to dress myself, tie my own shoes and use cutlery independently**

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Why we love this goal: We simply like this because of the functional independence it gives the child...and the extra time is cumulatively saves the parent. As therapists and parents we would then use the achievement of this goal in a way that supports the child's confidence to do things for themselves, and more importantly to foster a sense in them that they can achieve things with patience and persistence. We find straightforward goals like this are great to include for this reason alone.

We hope that you have found at least a couple of ideas that give you inspiration when writing your own goals, and understand some of the underlying principles. If you need some help with goal setting or helping your child develop their social or physical skills we would love to see you at our therapy sessions.

Call us on 0438 801 265 to discuss whether your child would be a good fit for our groups.

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